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BY
ARTHUR HENRY VEYSEY.
AUTHOR OF
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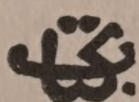
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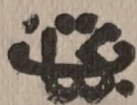
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ARTHUR HENRY VEYSEY

AUTHOR OF

"A CHEQUE FOR THREE THOUSAND," "A PEDIGREE
IN PAWN," "THE TWO WHITE ELEPHANTS."



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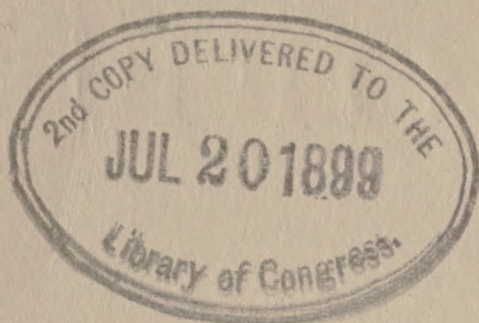
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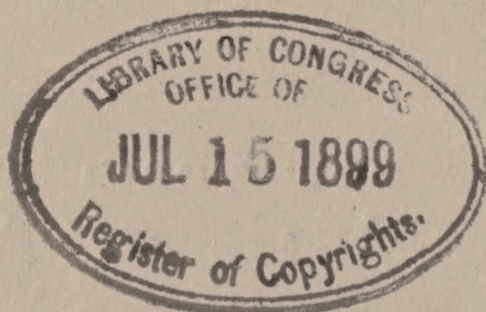
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HATS OFF!



CHAPTER I.

TWO QUEENS AND A PRINCE.

ON the morning of March 10, 1895, the Plain, Everyday New Yorker read in his morning paper that on the night previous several hundred solid and apparently sane citizens of the metropolis had in spirit, at least, forsaken the Constitution and Declaration of Independence of these United States of America.

They had dressed themselves up in court-breeches and swords. They had sanctioned by their presence the erection of a throne in the ball-room of the Hotel Rotterdam. They had winked complacently at the placing of a female personage on said throne, and a

crown of gilt and plush upon the head of said personage. They had even bent an obsequious and reverent knee to the same said personage, and (the spirit of Washington defend us !), they had taken an oath of solemn allegiance to her as their queen.

When the Plain, Everyday New Yorker read this startling piece of intelligence, he laid his newspaper on the table-cloth, puffed out his cheeks, stared ferociously at his better half, and demanded her instant answer whether the Republic was going to the devil or to the insane asylum.

Was it the entering wedge of royalty ? Was it one of the dangerous signs of the times ? What did it all mean ? demanded the Plain, Everyday New Yorker, thumping his fist on the table, and making the baby cry.

Soothing editorials had calmed his perturbed and anxious spirit. It meant very little indeed, replied the soothing editorials. Simply that Miss Belinda Van Winkle had been duly exalted head of a society organization known as the Van Winkle Dames, each of whom could boast a long line of blue-blooded ances-

tors in the land of the water dykes. Only instead of electing Miss Van Winkle by ballot—a very commonplace and rather vulgar method, it will be readily conceded by the unprejudiced mind—they had tried to be picturesque and original by crowning her queen. Miss Van Winkle had supplied the brocades and Catherine de Medici ruffs for the ladies, and court breeches and swords for the gentlemen. She had likewise imported a brand new scepter and crown. She had spent several hundred dollars for a suite of rooms and a ball-room in the Hotel Rotterdam. With these accessories, it was a very simple matter for the Van Winke Dames to put the crown on her head and the scepter in her right hand. And everybody agreed that this was much more interesting than a humdrum affair of the ballot-box. Especially for Miss Belinda Van Winkle.

When the Plain, Everyday New Yorker read this satisfactory explanation, he comforted himself with the assurance that the majority of the people in the world were idiots, and the reflection that the ceremony set money in circulation. He felt that it was hardly

worth while writing to the papers about. He thanked his stars that he at least had a little common-sense, chucked the baby under the chin until it crowed, kissed his better half until she smiled, and turned his ponderous mind to the more weighty matters of the day.

Every one, however, who has the slightest pretensions to a knowledge of natural philosophy knows that a tiny pebble may cause a very large ripple. The coronation of Queen Belinda Van Winkle was no exception to this law of natural philosophy. Because the correspondents of Paris newspapers quite overestimated the political importance of the affair. They entirely misunderstood its purport. So that flaring headlines appeared in all Paris newspapers, declaring that the republican institutions of the United States were tottering. A Queen had been declared by a little band of devoted royalists and admirers. They had smuggled an old throne through the custom-house. A royalist of the feminine gender had likewise smuggled in a scepter and crown by hiding them in her petticoats. Then, before any one could summon

enough presence of mind to interfere, they had installed upon the throne a lady of royal ancestry. They had rapturously declared her queen.

Prince Geoffrey de La Fleur was an impractical old imbecile, who spent most of his days and nights dreaming dreams and seeing visions in the library of his house in Paris. He wept maudlin tears that the white flower of chivalry and knighthood was no longer prized as of old. He spent his days and his nights poring over the fairy tales of tourney and court.

Now it happened one day that a copy of Froissart's "Chronicles," with a lot of interesting pictures in it, had come from his bookseller's. And as the old prince untied the string, the flaring headline of one of the newspapers that had contained the startling news of Queen Van Winkle's coronation met his eye.

"La Reine Van Winkle est Couronnée en les Etats Unis d'Amérique!"

"Revolution!"

"Furore Extraordinaire!"

Much more than the Plain, Everyday New Yorker, was the Prince astonished, and he was frenzied with

joy. Out there in the wild wilderness of pork-packers and shopkeepers bloomed a rare flower—the delicate soul of a real queen. It is true that she had been crowned in March, and it was September now. No doubt she had been dethroned, or he would have heard more of her. But even now she might be reigning in an obscure corner of the great continent—in Canada, Vera Cruz, or perhaps in Boston, still devotedly surrounded by the little band of royalists. “And even if you are no longer Queen,” mournfully mused the Prince, “you have attempted noble things, Queen Van Winkle. You have scorned the pork-packing tribe of unwashed Democrats. You have led the way back to pomp and glitter. Queen Van Winkle, I kiss your hand, I, the great Geoffrey de La Fleur, the last of his house !”

One night it chanced that as the Prince lay sleepless in his four-posted bed of state, his eyes followed the circle of tattered and moth-eaten bannerets that hung around the walls of his chamber, until his gaze rested on the jeweled setting of the Order of St. Martha.

The Order of St. Martha was the chiefest glory of his house. It had been founded in the twelfth century. It had been worn by emperors. It had been coveted by queens. Queens, in faith ! Queens, did he say ? Prince Geoffrey de la Fleur leaped out of his four-posted bed, struck by the splendor of a sudden thought. He stood trembling before the jeweled Order as it shone on the wall in the light of the moon. Queens had coveted it. Queens had worn it. Aye, and should wear it again ! The anniversary of the coronation of that American Queen was drawing nigh. It should be gloriously celebrated. She should know that one other great soul appreciated her.

So the Prince, while yet in his pajamas, seated himself before two lighted wax tapers on his writing desk, and began to indite an epistle to the Queen. He acquainted her with the unusual honor he would do her. On the anniversary of her coronation, he, the great Prince Geoffrey, would confer upon her the glorious and resplendent Order of St. Martha. If his lumbago was not too troublesome, he would make the journey to America himself. In case the lumbago was too

troublesome, he would send the decoration in the charge of an envoy extraordinary.

But when he had written this letter, and had put it into an envelope, and had picked up a pen to address the envelope, the Prince scratched his ear perplexedly. He had actually forgotten the name of the Queen ! The newspaper had long ago been lost or destroyed. He knew no person to whom he could write for information. But the Prince was not to be daunted in his purpose. He did not know the name of the Queen, it is true. He was not absolutely certain of the name of the society over which she ruled. But he did know that the society had something to do with Holland. He therefore addressed the envelope with a trembling hand in this fashion :

“ A La Reine de Deutsches Fraus, Etats Unis d’Amérique.”

Then the Prince blew out his wax tapers, and crept back to bed again, well satisfied with himself.

And so when, in due time, this epistle reached America, it was delivered, not to Queen Belinda Van Winkle of the Van Winkle Dames (who was, indeed,

traveling abroad just then), but to Queen Angelica Saunders, of the rival organization, the Dutch Fraus.

It is to be feared that Queen Angelica knew only too well that she had absolutely no right to the letter which had thus accidentally fallen into her hands. But this knowledge she kept locked up in her own breast. She had fought her way to the head of the Dutch Fraus only after bitter opposition. Especially had she been harassed by the machinations of the Vice-Queen. She felt that she had to silence all opposition by a splendid *coup d'état*. The offer of Prince Geoffrey de la Fleur to confer the Order of St. Martha came at the very nick of time. She was confident enough that she could successfully hoodwink the Prince as to her identity. So she answered his letter artfully, diplomatically. And the Prince, not dreaming of guile, informed her that in due time the Order would arrive.

Thus it came to pass that Queen Van Winkle, gathering hints in European capitals on the latest things in crowns and court etiquette, was boldly robbed of her birthright by crafty Queen Angelica of the Dutch Fraus.

As the day drew near on which Queen Angelica was to receive the Prince's decoration, preparations of the greatest magnitude and expense were made by the bold feminine usurper of princely honors.

Every member of the Dutch Fraus was taxed twenty-five dollars to help defray the cost of the ceremony. A certain minority of the society, indeed, led by the jealous Vice-Queen, murmured at the payment of a sum sufficient to buy a Paris hat, simply to do honor to Queen Angelica. But the majority paid the sum willingly enough. They felt that the Prince in honoring the Queen was honoring the Dutch Fraus. Besides, Queen Angelica and her fiancé, Knight Sir Roy, set a noble example. They drew heavily and recklessly upon their bank accounts. They engaged the grand ball-room of the Hotel Rotterdam for the ceremony and half a dozen suites of apartments. At a fabulous salary Sir Roy enlisted the expert services of the cleverest press agent in the theatrical profession. There was not a man, woman, or child in the City of New York who did not await the evening of the ceremony with breathless interest. There was not

a member of the élite directory who would not have pawned her latest gown, if the price derived therefrom would have procured her the privilege of admission to the ceremony. Yes; Queen Angelica was determined that the Bradley-Martin ball should no more compare with her function in splendor and expense than a dollar compares with thirty cents. And all the members of the Van Winkle Dames ate out their hearts with envy.

CHAPTER II.

WHERE'S THE ENVOY ?

THE festal day had arrived !

Bushels and bushels of flowers had been used in decorating the grand ball-room and suite 123, especially reserved for the Envoy Extraordinary of Prince Geoffrey, whose lumbago had unfortunately proved too troublesome for himself to undertake the journey. Scores of differently colored electric lights had been cunningly arranged among the flowers and tapestries of the throne. Columns and columns of personals concerning the Prince and the Queen had glutted the newspapers. Dozens of modistes had been robbed of their sleep, sitting up nights in devising sixteenth century costumes for the invited guests and for the members of the society.

Everybody in the Hotel Rotterdam had been on the run, from the youngest bell-boy to Manager

Locke himself, carrying out the behests of the excited members. The lords and ladies in waiting, the pages and the heralds, the equerries and chancellors had been thoroughly rehearsed in their several parts. The mob had been coached to cheer the arrival of the carriage that was to bring the Envoy Extraordinary to the hotel. And now, at five o'clock in the afternoon, there was a lull. The Dutch Fraus were lying down, trying to get a few winks of refreshing sleep for the exacting pleasures of the evening.

But sleep itself was far from the Queen's eyes.

Indeed, she had every reason to feel deeply anxious.

The decoration of St. Martha had not yet been received.

The Envoy Extraordinary had not arrived in America !

No wonder Queen Angelica found it hard work to keep up her spirits.

As a matter of fact the conduct of the Prince had been of late perplexingly capricious. Until a few weeks ago, his letters had been invariably gracious. But suddenly, and most illogically, so it seemed to

the Queen, his ardor cooled. He had even hinted that in view of his absence, the ceremony must necessarily lose most of its splendor, and had suggested that the conferring of the decoration be postponed until a more fitting occasion.

Queen Angelica vigorously and hysterically combatted this egotistical proposition. She tearfully recounted to him the untold expense to which she had been put. She pointed out the ridicule to which she would be subjected should he not keep his princely word. She appealed to his honor. And when all these considerations failed to bring any reply, she had recourse to desperate threats. Then the Prince at last sulkily yielded. He wrote in the coldest terms that the decoration would be forthcoming. It was intrusted to a special messenger on board the *Paris*.

But the *Paris* was one day overdue. It was now five o'clock in the afternoon, and she had not yet been reported. Not that it would make so very much difference if the decoration itself did not arrive until afterwards. Queen Angelica was a woman of enough resource to hire something from a costumer's that

would at a pinch answer the purpose sufficiently well. It was the delay of the envoy that troubled her exceedingly. Because the clever press agent had so magnified the estate and importance of the Envoy Extraordinary that the Prince himself could not have awakened more interest and speculation in the breasts of the expectant public.

It was to no purpose that the Queen's devoted lover, Knight Sir Roy, attempted to comfort her. Not even the blessed assurance that the ship had at last been sighted, and was actually coming up the bay, could arouse Queen Angelica from the depression that overwhelmed her.

"It is no use, Roy," she said, as she breathed on the crown she was polishing ; "I cannot help my forebodings. You know that I am a bold woman, and would not hesitate to push aside any obstacle that arose in my path. But if that envoy should not arrive, I could not manufacture one, and I fear that my power would be gone. My soul, Roy, is distraught with fear."

"Yes, I must say that this wouldn't be much of a

function without the envoy," said Sir Roy gloomily, as he watched his sweetheart apply the chamois leather vigorously to the gilt of the crown. "But, my dear, you will rub all the gilt off, if you are not more gentle, and you may dislodge one of the jewels."

"Well, they are only paste, as you know," replied the Queen crossly.

"Nevertheless, my love," replied Sir Roy, concernedly, "paste jewels look quite as well by electric light as do real Barrios diamonds. A cavity made by the loss of one of those paste jewels, my sweet, will be quite as glaring as a cavity made by the loss of a more expensive article."

"Hush," whispered the Queen, hiding the crown in her bureau drawer. "That deceitful creature, the Vice-Queen, is listening outside, and if she knew that these jewels were not real, or if the Envoy Extraordinary should not come, how she would gloat. She would bring things about so that my power would be gone forever. I know it. And I hate her."

"How do you like my frock?" asked the Vice-

Queen, bursting into the room without the formality of a knock at the door.

"Very pretty," replied the Queen without looking at it. "And I wish, my dear, you would have the goodness to knock before you enter my chamber."

"It is only my way, you know," replied the Vice-Queen ingenuously, as she peeped into the drawer the Queen had only half shut. "Oh, what a love of a crown, isn't it? I wonder how I should look with it on?"

She placed the crown saucily on the side of her pretty head, and made faces at herself in the pier-glass.

The Queen frowned at her rival angrily. She knew very well that the apparently innocent remark of the Vice-Queen was a veiled insult meant to wound her to the quick. The Vice-Queen, you see, was plump, young, and beautiful. The Queen was forty, angular, and not beautiful.

"It is time for me to dress," said the Queen, snatching the crown away before the Vice-Queen could examine it closely. "And please, remember," added the Queen, frowning, "that I happen to wear that crown."

I am, therefore, the center of attraction. I must ask you, my love, not to push yourself forward so much. You have no repose, absolutely none. Especially, I must ask you not to bore the Envoy with any obnoxious attentions."

The Vice-Queen made a mock obeisance. "Certainly not, my dear. I will shine only in your reflected glory. Besides, how absurd to think that an Envoy would take any notice of poor little me when a real queen was standing by. But men are so queer sometimes, aren't they? And if they *will* flirt with you, you can't help it, *can* you?"

"It is time for me to dress," said the Queen again, with an ominous scowl.

"Oh, how stupid of me not to think," answered the Vice-Queen, delighted to have caused the scowl. She tripped out of the room, the Queen still glaring at her.

"I should just love to slap that woman," said Queen Angelica with a savage intensity that was eminently regal. "You see, Roy, if she doesn't do her very best to fascinate the Envoy. And, oh, if by any

chance that Envoy shouldn't come, I know as truly as I am holding this crown in my hand that she would influence the Dutch Fraus to make me abdicate my throne."

"But he will come, dearest," answered Sir Roy cheerfully, as he pulled on his gloves. "And I am going to the dock at this very minute to meet him."

"Heaven grant it!" cried the Queen fervently.

As Knight Sir Roy passed out of the Hotel Rotterdam between bowing, obsequious servants to his carriage, he said to himself, "It is really very gratifying to be engaged to the most talked of woman in New York, but if that Prince has gone back on us, and hasn't sent a tip-top envoy with the decoration, I shan't lend Angel another dollar."

It was a magnificent equipage in which Sir Roy luxuriously settled himself. The horses had rosettes of orange, the color of the Dutch Fraus, and purple, emblematic of royalty. The liveries of the coachman and footman corresponded, so that when the carriage stood outside the dock, reporters at once espied it and came crowding around Sir Roy.

With a half a dozen reporters at his elbow, Sir Roy watched the people descending the gangway of the *Paris*. He had promised the reporters that they should have a nice little interview with the Envoy Extraordinary, if they permitted him to be the first to greet his honored guest. He looked anxiously for some one who should carry his head haughtily as would be befitting for an envoy of so powerful and aristocratic a personage as Prince Geoffrey de la Fleur. But the passengers seemed to be so distressingly ordinary. They were all so unfeignedly glad to get back to America, and they all seemed to know exactly what to do and where they wished to go. There was not one of them that hesitated. But then that was hardly surprising. Of course the Envoy Extraordinary would keep to the seclusion of the cabin until the common herd were out of the way.

When all the passengers had descended the gangway, Sir Roy with a beating heart went aboard. He asked an officer standing at the cabin door where he could find the Envoy of Prince Geoffrey.

"Envoy!" repeated the second officer, staring.

"Of a Prince ! I didn't know there was one aboard. He must have come *incog.*, sir. What's his name ?"

Sir Roy confessed that he did not know the Envoy's name.

"Better see the steward," said the second officer.

"No," said the steward, "I don't know of any Envoy. Better see the captain, sir."

"Envoy ! Prince !" cried the captain, quite as much astonished as the rest of the ship's officers had been. "If he's been aboard my ship, he's kept it pretty quiet. I haven't seen or heard anything of him."

"But," cried Sir Roy, his heart sinking, "*some one* on board of this ship has an important package for me."

He explained as well as he could the state of affairs to the puzzled captain.

"See the purser," advised the captain, when Sir Roy had done his best to enlighten the mariner.

"People sometimes send knickknacks by him."

"There's no doubt of it," thought Sir Roy ruefully

as he made his way to the purser's cabin, "he hasn't come. What in the world will my poor dear do?"

The purser had heard nothing of an Envoy, but he confessed that he had a package for a Miss Angelica Saunders. But he stubbornly refused to give it to Sir Roy, unless the latter had an order in writing from Miss Saunders authorizing him to receive it. And when Sir Roy said he had no order in writing, the purser insisted that he must be identified.

"That's impossible," cried Sir Roy. "There's no time for that. The parcel must be up at the Rotterdam in an hour."

"I don't know but w'at I could come with you, if you made it worth my while," said the purser.

"In that uniform?" cried the horrified Sir Roy. "Never!"

"I don't see any flies on that uniform, young man," said the purser, hotly. "And you can't 'ave this parcel unless you prove your rights to it, or wait till I choose to come up to the Rotterdam."

Sir Roy was in a terrible quandary. If he returned to the hotel with no one in the carriage, the reporters

would see at once that the Envoy had not come. They were standing on the dock there waiting for him to come out. But if the purser went into the carriage with that uniform on his broad back, it would be just as bad. He stared at the purser helplessly.

"I don't suppose that you have such a thing as a frock coat and a silk hat about you, have you, purser?" he asked nervously.

"No, I ain't," replied the purser, "but the ship's doctor 'as 'em."

"And would you mind borrowing them, and putting them on to come to the hotel in?" begged Sir Roy, eagerly.

"By no means," assented the sailorman cheerfully. "But you'll 'ave to make it worth my while, sir."

"Oh, that'll be all right," promised Sir Roy. "Only hurry up."

But when the purser returned, attired in the habiliments of the ship's doctor, he looked so hopelessly plebeian and so utterly unlike what even an ordinary envoy of any respectability should look like, that Sir Roy groaned.

" 'Ow do I look ? " asked the purser complacently, stooping so that he could see himself in the mirror of a buffet in the dining-saloon.

The knot of reporters on the dock were impatiently awaiting Sir Roy's coming. A small mob encompassed the carriage. Sir Roy appealed to the purser: " Can't you manage it that the carriage can drive right up to the gangway ? " he asked.

" Any one'd think you were hashamed of me," remarked the purser, sulkily. " W'at's the game you're playin', anyhow ? "

" Now please be sensible," implored Sir Roy. " It is quite true that I don't want you to be seen, because you are supposed to be some one else. I want to get you in that carriage so that none of those reporters can see you."

" Oh," asked the purser with interest, " am I supposed to be a 'eavy swell ? "

" A very heavy swell," answered Sir Roy hurriedly. " And can't you sneak along with me to the second cabin gangway, and send out a sailor to whisper instructions to the coachman that he is to drive to the

saloon gangway, as if he was waiting for us there. But when he gets a signal, he is to drive up to the second cabin gangway instead. That'll fool those reporter fellows."

"Yes, I suppose I can manage that," agreed the purser, reluctantly. "But I must say if I'm playin' a 'eavy swell, it seems to me it'd be more sensible to get your money's worth and let me show my phiz."

"No, no," cried Sir Roy. "That is simply impossible."

"Oh, hall right. I just threw it hout as a suggestion. But if I'm going to sneak along the promenade deck of my own ship and down the gangway in that hignominious fashion, it'll cost you three quid more."

The ruse succeeded very well, much better than Sir Roy had dared to hope. He pulled down the blinds, and the carriage dashed out on West Street, and the reporters had no glimpse of the person within.

But Sir Roy was wondering what Angelica would say when he returned to the hotel in this carriage of state with only a sailorman inside, instead of the Envoy Extraordinary.

CHAPTER III.

THE PURSER AS SUBSTITUTE.

“WELL,” asked the purser, sinking back in the cushions, and putting his feet on the seat opposite, “what’s goin’ to ’appen now?”

“Nothing, I hope,” replied Sir Roy, brushing away a dirty mark that the purser’s boots had made on his trousers. “Except that I’m to be identified, and then you are to hand over to me that package!”

“Anythin’ to accommodate you, that’s reasonable, sir,” remarked the purser, lighting a twopenny cigar.

Sir Roy cast a look of dislike at the sailorman. If he had only been not quite so brawny and big, he would have been tempted to fling the vulgar and mercenary creature out of the carriage window. And his perplexity and dismay became greater and greater as to how he should get the fellow inside the hotel without attracting undue attention. Sir Roy remembered

with a shudder the band of men whom the press agent had hired to cheer the arrival of the carriage containing the Envoy Extraordinary. Indeed, as they neared the Hotel Rotterdam there was a subdued murmur of many voices. Sir Roy cautiously lifted the blind. Yes; there were the mercenary cheerers, with the clever press agent at their head to lead them off in the applause.

Sir Roy groaned in anguish of spirit, and crossly jerked back the purser's head thrust between the blind and the window.

"'Ere, 'ere," cried the sailorman angrily. "W'at yer givin' us?"

"Then don't poke your head out of the window like that," replied Sir Roy just as angrily.

"Just keep your 'air on, will you!" threatened the purser.

"Drive round to the back door," shouted Sir Roy to the coachman, "and if there's a crowd there, too, just keep driving round the block until they go away."

As the equipage that was supposed to bring the Envoy Extraordinary neared the hotel's rear entrance,

the alert press agent had hurriedly led a band of the mercenary cheerers thither, and was cheerfully prepared to give the distinguished guest a vociferous welcome.

“Now then, here she comes, boys. Whoop her up for all she’s worth. One, two, three, altogether—what the devil——”

The press agent and the twenty lusty cheerers were staring at the rear of the carriage that had swept like a whirlwind by them, and was now tearing around the block. And before the bewildered press agent and his cohorts had quite recovered from their astonishment, the horses, having speedily raced around the block, were the second time dashing up to the hotel door.

“They didn’t get enough style on her the first time, I guess, boys. Then put lots of ginger in your cheering to make up for that first fluke—hip, hip—by all that’s reasonable, has the fool coachman lost his head?”

Five times these remarkable evolutions were carried out to the extreme mystification of the crowd

that was now gathered around the press agent. Each time the press agent and his band opened their mouths to cheer vociferously. Each time the carriage whirled by them, the faces of the coachman and footman immovable and set, as if it was quite customary to drive around blocks a dozen times before actually making a stop at the door.

The fact was, the Knight Sir Roy had quite lost his head. Although he was keenly alive to the absurdity of the performance, he was so paralyzed with fright that he could not summon up enough resolution to devise any more sensible plan. If it hadn't been for the purser, the carriage might have driven around the block until the driver and his master had been arrested and taken to Bellevue to have their sanity inquired into.

But at the seventh turn of the carriage around the corner, the purser had taken hold of the lapel of Sir Roy's coat and shaken him violently.

"Look 'ere, look 'ere," cried the sailorman angrily, "I'll be 'anged if I'm goin' to ride in this 'ere merry-go-round of yours any longer. I'm gettin' giddy, I am."

"Nonsense," expostulated Sir Roy, his teeth chattering in his perplexity. "The idea of a sailor who climbs masts and things getting dizzy. Look at me. I'm not dizzy."

"I *ham* lookin' at you," replied the sailorman with scorn. "And I'm thinkin' I'm seein' a bloomin', blasted hidiot. I'm goin' to get out, I am."

"No, no, no—not without giving me the package. Now do be sensible, there's a dear, good, kind fellow. Just a few more turns. The crowd must get discouraged after a few more dozen turns."

"Then you'll 'ave to make it another five quid," threatened the purser. "And I want to know what all this 'ere fuss is about. I'm not going to be mixed up with any hidiot hasylums or circuses."

And again the purser made a violent pretense at opening the door.

"Now just sit still, and I'll make it all perfectly clear," implored Sir Roy. "Don't get excited." Then, driven by his desperate strait into making a confidant of the purser, he explained, "You see, that package you are holding in your hand contains nothing less than a jeweled Order."

"Masonic," asked the purser with much interest, "or Knights Templars' ? or maybe a dook's or a hearl's ?"

"Oh, much grander than any of those," answered the lover of Queen Angelica, with a pardonable pride. "It's an Order of a prince."

"A live prince ?" echoed the purser, transferring the package reverently from hand to hand.

"He has sent it to my sister."

"By George !" exclaimed the purser, looking at Sir Roy with a trifle more respect than he had hitherto shown. "I 'ope I didn't give any offense, sir, with w'at I said about circuses and hasylums."

"That's all right," answered Sir Roy magnanimously. "You didn't know any better. But, you see, that package was supposed to come by an Envoy Extraordinary. We've advertised his coming in the papers, and I don't want all those people standing by the door there to know he hasn't come. Do you see ?"

"Well," said the sailorman, "why should they ?"

"There is no reason at all why they should," cried

the delighted Sir Roy, "if you'll only have a little common sense, you know, and give me the package, and let me quietly dump you down around the block."

The purser shook his head.

"It can't be done, sir. If this 'ere parcel is a horder of royalty, it's all the more himportant that I don't take any chances."

"Then what *is* to be done?" asked Sir Roy. "*You* can't be the Envoy, you know."

"Why not?" asked the purser, with enthusiasm. "Ain't I pretendin' to be 'im now? Just look 'ere." He tapped Sir Roy confidentially on the knee. "This 'ere parcel ain't goin' into the 'ands of hany other person than the person wrote on the wrapper, you can bet on that. And we can't keep ridin' in this merry-go-round all night, you know. Well, then, as I'm supposed to be the henvoy with the blinds down, let me be 'un really with the blinds hup. You can't do no better, sir, depend upon it."

Sir Roy looked at him doubtfully. As the purser said, there seemed to be no better course, risky as it would undoubtedly be to pass off the sailorman for

the Envoy. So he shouted at the coachman to stop at the rear entrance.

And when the carriage did at last stop, the fifty lusty hired cheerers, led by the press agent, made up in volume of sound for their repeated disappointments. And at the cheer, the manager and the assistant manager and the clerks and the reporters and the bell-boys and the guests and all of the Dutch Fraus who were not trying to get forty winks of sleep,—came running to the door and joined heartily in the cheer. The equipage drew up with a flourish. The fifty cheerers vented all their suspense in one glorious roar of welcome. The officials of the hotel made a lane on either side of the entrance. The guests and the Dutch Fraus stood agog with expectation. Even Queen Angelica herself could not restrain her curiosity. She poked her head out of the window, and looked with pride on the scene below, although she knew it was not exactly a dignified thing for a queen to do.

The purser was determined to play the heavy swell with all his might and main. He was bent upon giving satisfaction to his unwilling employer.

He alighted from the carriage with his broad back as stiff as possible ; so stiff, indeed, that Sir Roy expected to see the ship doctor's coat rip its seams open at every ponderous movement. He carried the package containing the order as conspicuously as possible ; and when the Queen from the seventh story saw the package, she glued her eyes so ravenously upon it, that she hardly noticed the extraordinary envoy who bore it.

But in spite of the undeniably haughty expression upon the purser's florid countenance, some of the spectators (notably half a dozen envious Van Winkle Dames) giggled irreverently at the plenteous crop of hair that composed the sailorman's side-burns. Then the fit of his coat was so very questionable. And his trousers were so remarkably wide and baggy. As one of the bell-boys remarked, "It may be the style of Picadilly or the boolevards, but I has me doubts." •

But the purser and Sir Roy made their slow and painful way to the elevator, and in due time Sir Roy, with a sigh of relief, had safely locked the purser in suite 123.

Then with a palpitating heart he went to the apartments of poor Queen Angelica to break to her the terrible predicament which they were in.

CHAPTER IV.

WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING.

HISTORIANS often considerably draw a kindly veil between the little piccadilloes of their heroes and heroines and the gaping public. There is no reason in the world why the precedent should not be followed in this history of the Envoy Extraordinary of Queen Angelica the first.

“If you had only driven him to another hotel, and then telephoned for me, stupid !” she screamed. “We can never use such a person as the Envoy Extraordinary of a prince. The people would know in a minute that he was only a sham. A purser !” she moaned. “A common sailorman ! Oh, merciful heavens, how that Vice-Queen will gloat !”

“I never thought of it, Angelica,” confessed the miserable Sir Roy. “You see, the people would have recognized the liveries of the coachman and footman

in a minute even at another hotel (the press agent has described them so many times), and I didn't think you would want it known, Angel, that there wasn't any envoy at all. And then, you see, he was so obstinate. He wouldn't let me have the decoration in a quiet, peaceable manner in a quiet street and then let me drop him. He insisted on either getting out, right before the people of the hotel, too, or else coming in to give you the package. What was I to do, my dear ? ”

“ Well,” said the unhappy Queen resignedly, “ I suppose it can't be helped now. You can't gather up spilt milk, I've heard mother say. I suppose we shall *have* to hire him to be the envoy.”

“ By heaven, no,” cried Sir Roy, greatly alarmed at such a possibility.

“ Why not ? Then what is your idea ? ” asked the Queen, irritably.

“ To pay him, and let him slip quietly out of the hotel ; and then get one of our friends to act the part. That man is absolutely impossible, Angel dear.”

“ I will judge of that when I see him,” said the Queen, snappishly.

Sir Roy unlocked the door of the apartment in which he had confined the purser, to prevent any of the reporters from seeing him.

"Here he is," said Sir Roy, indicating the sailor-man, who was sprawling comfortably on a Louis XV sofa, examining the tapestries on the walls with interest.

"Glad to know you, ma'am," said the purser deferentially, but a little disappointed that the Queen did not wear her crown. Then he whispered to Sir Roy, as the disgusted Queen looked at him, "'igh-toned diggin's these, ain't they?"

"So you are the man in whose care the Prince sent the package?" asked the Queen, at length.

"I'm the chap that's got a package for Miss Angelica Saunders," replied the purser. "It's that gentleman there who says as it's from a Prince and that you're a Queen. But I'm glad to accommodate in any ways reasonable, ma'am, Queen or no Queen."

"I am Miss Angelica Saunders," said the Queen, haughtily, holding out her hand for the coveted package.

"Very good, miss. But this gentleman, miss, 'e was 'intin' at there bein' a job for me as henvoy, miss——"

"I did nothing of the sort," shouted Sir Roy, angrily.

"I'm sure I'm willin' to do it just as reasonable as the next man," continued the purser, persuasively, "and you'll find me sober, industrious, and willin'. Only I must get through the job to-night so as to get back to my ship."

"This gentleman was quite mistaken, if he said such a thing. Now will you have the goodness to give me that package and be gone?"

Again she reached out her hand, but the disappointed purser held it cautiously behind his back.

"Now, 'old 'ard, miss, if you please. Let's do things ship-shape. If this is a parcel from royalty, I can't be too careful. And 'ow am I to know as you're Miss Saunders? You must prove it, please, miss."

"I will get you one of my cards, and some letters with my name on them."

The purser shook his head.

"Then I'll get one of the bell-boys to identify me, if you so rudely insist," cried the Queen, annoyed.

Again the purser shook his head obstinately.

"It'll take more than a bell-boy or a bunch of letters, miss. For all I know to the contrary, you and this gent may be a gang of those bunco steerers that I've 'eard tell of. No, no, miss. It'll be the manager 'isself who will 'ave to hidentify you, if you please, miss. I'm sorry to discommode you, but I can't think of givin' hup this 'ere horder of royalty without things bein' done ship-shape."

The Queen gazed at the obstinate purser, greatly disturbed in spirit. The manager ! The shade of Mary Queen of Scots ! It would be impossible for the manager to identify her as Angelica Saunders without his seeing at once that no envoy had come. And the Queen was determined upon one thing, absolutely. She would have an Envoy Extraordinary or she would know the reason why. She would hire one. But that vulgar creature, who left his *h's* out, and was now lolling insolently on the sofa, was quite

unfit for the part, as her lover had said. She must conciliate the man, even at the expense of dollars and dignity. She must get him out of the hotel quickly and quietly. So the Queen put aside her chilling air, and sat down beside the purser, and looked at him as seductively and as charmingly as forty can look.

“Now, my dear Mr. Purser,” she cooed, darting a coquettish glance at the sailorman, who was indeed of a remarkably impressionable nature, “won’t you please be reasonable? I’m going to cast myself at your feet. I’m quite at your mercy, I confess it. I’m going to tell you that we don’t want it known for the world that the Envoy Extraordinary hasn’t come. And though you are the nicest and most gallant sailor, you wouldn’t be quite a success as an envoy. So I can’t ask you to be it, though I should like to very, *very* much. I can only ask you please to give me the package—to believe that I really am Miss Saunders. I know you will do this, because all sailors are the kindest and most generous men in the world.”

The purser wavered.

“I’ll take you to my room, if you insist, and show

you my trunks with my name on them. And I'll call as many bell-boys as you please. But don't ask me to call the manager, and I shall be grateful to you as long as I live. Won't you say yes? Won't you, *please?* "

The Queen leaned very close to the impressionable sailorman.

"We'll make it worth your while, purser," said Sir Roy, who knew by bitter experience the effect of a good sound financial argument on the purser.

"What's it worth?" asked the purser, hoarsely.

"Fifty dollars," promptly replied the Queen.

"I scorn to 'aggle," cried the purser with a fine burst of generous enthusiasm, "but make it a 'undred and the bell-boys and the trunks be blowed."

"A hundred it is," sighed Sir Roy, taking out his pocket-book.

Then the purser was meekly led away by Sir Roy. And fortune favored the latter so greatly that he managed to let his enemy out of the hotel without anybody's taking the slightest notice. He returned jubilantly to the Queen.

“ Well, he’s got rid of, thank goodness ! ”

“ Yes,” replied the Queen, gloomily. “ But half a dozen reporters have been sending up their cards, asking permission to interview the Envoy Extraordinary.”

“ And what in the world did you say ? ” asked the frightened Sir Roy.

“ I told them that he is resting, fatigued by his long voyage. He is lying down, not feeling very well.”

“ What ! ” cried Sir Roy in an awed voice, “ you are pretending that he’s in suite 123 ? By Jove, what a woman you are ! ” said Sir Roy with admiration. “ But, Angel, don’t do it. Let’s tell the truth. Let’s fling up the sponge and call ourselves beaten.”

“ Never ! ” retorted the Queen with energy. “ I have planned a course of action. Do you remember, Roy, how once my Lord Chancellor didn’t appear at a function ? ”

“ Perfectly,” replied Sir Roy. “ You hired another off Mr. Jones, the Super Captain.”

“ Precisely. And do you remember how well that supernumerary played his part ? Quite as well as a

real lord chancellor could have done. Why should we not engage the same man to play the Envoy Extraordinary ? ”

Sir Roy was speechless.

“ Of course I know the risk. But a Queen has to take risks very often. And sometimes she has to be unscrupulous. There was Lady Macbeth and Elizabeth. Then, Roy, this is what you are to do. You must see those reporters first. You must pacify them. Promise them that they shall see the Envoy later. And of course we shall take care that they do not see him—that he is spirited away after the ceremony. Then take a cab, and go as fast as you can to the house of the Super Captain. Explain to him our needs. Bind him to secrecy first, however. Try to get him not to demand immediate payment. My purse is a little low. But promise that he shall be reimbursed liberally. Go, Roy, dear, at once. He must be our saviour in our extremity.”

And Sir Roy with many misgivings at heart went his way to the Captain of the Supernumeraries.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUPER CAPTAIN IS APPEALED TO.

THERE are several captains of supernumeraries in New York City, no doubt. But the man with whom Queen Angelica had had dealings is a gentleman of an Hebraic cast of countenance who rejoices in the Christian name of Jones. Many, many years ago, he himself had been an humble aspirant to Thespian honors and had carried a spear at twenty-five cents a performance, matinées thrown in.

But Mr. Jones had been no ordinary super. He had had feelings. And he had had ambition. He had been hurt at the brutal fashion in which the stage manager had often addressed himself and his fellow supers. He had resented the indignity of dressing in the cellars of theaters, among old properties and discarded scenery and rats and filth. He had caught cold from the drafts. He had become sick from the

bad air. But especially had he resented the paltry remuneration of twenty-five cents a performance as a sop for suffering all these indignities and discomforts.

Mr. Jones had not kept this noble resentment to himself. On the contrary, he had aired it thoroughly. He had so filled the bosoms of other spear-carriers and mob-shouters with a like spirit of resentment, that when at last they had plucked up courage, under his incessant goadings and tauntings, to make a bold demand to all the theatrical managers of the city for a more liberal compensation for their distinguished services, they had unanimously appointed Mr. Jones spokesman to represent the indignities and wrongs that they were heir to. Mr. Jones had accepted the trust with alacrity. And so well did the philanthropic Mr. Jones accomplish his diplomatic mission, so eloquently did he plead the rights of supers, that they agreed to increase the rate of payment to fifty cents a performance. Mr. Jones had become known as "the super's idol."

Mark now the more substantial reward of this dis-

interested philanthropy. In the course of his duties as supers' advocate the judicious Mr. Jones had come into close contact with all the managers of New York City. So that when the time was ripe, and he had gained not only the love and confidence of the supers, but the respect and fear of the managers themselves, he had addressed each of these latter somewhat as follows :

“ I have noticed, Mr. Manager, that you have considerable trouble with your supers. They sometimes get drunk. Often they don't turn up at performances. They are unintelligent. They are loafers. Very often you are compelled to use a short super when you should use a tall super, and a tall super when the part calls for a short super. Now, if you will let me help you, I can remedy all that. I will make a contract with you to supply you with supers that are neither unintelligent nor unduly fond of intoxicating liquors. When you want a tall super to carry a spear you will have a tall super, and not a short one. When you want a short and smooth-faced super to act as an Italian minstrel to blow through a fake flute or to

twang a fake harp, you shall have a short and smooth-faced super who will look the part. Indeed, my supers shall be so carefully selected that they shall be actors in the rough. They shall be worthy of advance to dramatic honors. They shall play well their thinking parts. I will do all the advertising and selecting. All you will have to do will be to say to me, 'I want so many supers and of such a character,' and you will have them. I shall not ask you to pay anything for my services. I shall get my pay by docking each super fifty cents a week. And I shall have a corner in supers and so they won't dare to kick. Is it a go?"

"It is a go," each delighted manager had replied, embracing the philanthropic and enterprising Mr. Jones.

It is true that the guileless supernumeraries had been a little glum when fifty cents of their pay went each week into the Super Captain's pocket. But Mr. Jones had really done them yeoman's service, and they realized that it was too late to make any fuss since he had a corner on supers. So they had yielded cheerfully the fifty cents each week, and Mr. Jones no longer

carried a spear, but became a broker, so to speak, in other supernumeraries of spear-carrying aspirations.

It was to this sagacious gentleman that Queen Angelica in her dire extremity had sent Sir Roy.

Mr. Jones was dining sumptuously on porterhouse smothered in onions, when Sir Roy burst into his flat and interrupted his epicurean labors. The Super Captain listened attentively to Sir Roy's tale, his knife and fork posed deferentially in the air.

"Now then, Mr. Jones," cried Sir Roy, when he had explained the harassing situation, "the question is, can you put your hands on the man whom my sister hired to play the lord chancellor last year, and get him to play the Envoy Extraordinary for us to-night?"

"No," replied the Super Captain laconically, "I can't, Mr. Poplar, for the very good reason that he's been promoted to a speaking part and he ain't a super no longer."

"That is unfortunate," said Sir Roy, greatly disappointed. "Then have you any other young man who can look the part of Envoy Extraordinary, who

can challenge the combined gaze of thirty argus-eyed reporters, and yet cause no inconvenient suspicions to arise in their minds ? ”

“ Mr. Poplar,” proudly cried the Super Captain, shaking a long French loaf at his visitor, “ I can put my hand, sir, on a super that could play the part of the prince hisself or of a king, if he only had the chance. He’s the real stuff, sir, with a wad of bills in his pocket that would hurt your foot to kick, a gentleman born and bred, sir, college bred, too.”

“ Magnificent ! ” cried Sir Roy, overjoyed. “ And can you get him in an hour ? There’s no time to lose. It’s half-past six now.”

“ Cert,” said the Super Captain. “ But, Mr. Poplar, I ain’t in this biz for my health, you know.”

Sir Roy colored angrily.

“ Really, Mr. Jones, I don’t know exactly what you mean. Of course a suitable recompense—”

“ Oh, yes, you do,” confidently replied the Super Captain, leaning back in his chair, his thumbs stuck in the arm-holes of his rather loud waistcoat of red velvet, and his eyes gleaming shrewdly at Sir Roy.

"There's the little bill of the Queen's that I've been dunnin' her for the past three months. That's got to be settled before I do anything more, sir."

Sir Roy paid the bill, not without some reluctance.

"And you are sure that your man will do?" he asked, rising to go.

"Sure pop. You can leave the matter with me, sir. I have a man in my mind's eye that's just the thing. He's got brass enough to cast a cannon with, and aristocratic looks that would make a haughty Egyptian mummy up in the Metropolitan Museum there turn in his grave with envy. He's at the *Frivolity* now, supin' in 'The Life of Sport.' He's six foot one in his stockin's, his clothes were made on Fifth Avenue, and he's been at Harvard College. He's just supin' because he's stage-struck. He's a peach. He'll suit the Queen right down to the ground. A thorough-goin' sport, he is, a tip-top gent!"

"Superb!" cried Sir Roy, rubbing his hands, and thinking how pleased the Queen would be at the success of his mission. "And look here, Mr. Jones. You'll have to see that he sneaks into suite 123 with-

out any one's knowing it. Because all the newspaper-men and the hotel people think the Envoy's in there now, resting up for to-night. He must be at the hotel promptly by half-past eight. I will be outside the apartment waiting for him to let him in."

"On the minute he shall be there," promised the Super Captain, putting on his overcoat. "And how about his togs? A Envoy, I think you said, Mr. Poplar? A character part, eh? What do you say to his wearin' silk tights, doublet and hose, you know, and a blond, curly wig? I can get 'em at the costumers."

"Oh, no!" cried Sir Roy, aghast. "He must be in conventional evening clothes, of course. Do you suppose your man has a suitable dress-suit?"

"Has he? Well, rather! In 'The Life of Sport' supers get a dollar extra if they supply their own dress-suits. And I've seen my man's suit. It's a bird—long, stylish tails and broad, velvet collar, regular Bond Street style—English, you know. And his silk hat's a daisy! Oh, he'll look the part all right, never you worry, Mr. Poplar. And give my respects to the

Queen, sir, and tell her anythin' else I can do to oblige her, she'll be welcome to. And I suppose you will make it convenient to pay my man spot cash, sir? I won't ask it now. Pay my man to-night if you're satisfied; fire him back and no pay if you aren't. That's square, ain't it?"

"Perfectly satisfactory," replied Sir Roy rather coldly. He wished that the lower classes would not be so mercenary in spirit. Really, there was very little romance in their coarse natures.

But he drove back at full speed to the Rotterdam, eager to cheer up Queen Angelica with the tidings of his successful mission. And the Super Captain took a street car to the theater, to get the supernumerary whom he had selected to play the responsible rôle of Envoy Extraordinary.

CHAPTER VI.

AUGUSTUS HIGGINS, SUPER NO. 5.

THERE is a wise saying to the effect that the best laid plans of rodents and bipeds are often doomed to disastrous failure.

The Super Captain and especially the Queen were to feel the bitter truth of the proverb this evening.

The Super Captain had spoken in all sincerity to Sir Roy when he had lauded to the skies the supernumerary whom he had selected to play the rôle of Envoy Extraordinary. Mr. Jones, neither by birth nor breeding, could be termed exactly a gentleman, but he was a shrewd enough man of affairs to recognize a gentleman when he saw one.

But when he entered the stage door of the *Frivolity* in search of his jewel of a super, passed across the stage, then being set for the Earl's Court scene, descended the dirty, rickety steps leading to the regions

below, and asked of his assistant, who was checking off each of the supernumeraries as they reported for duty, for the super whom he had in mind, he learned to his dismay that he had not been at the theater for three nights.

"He's been laid up for a week, cap.," said the assistant, as he punched a super's check.

"Laid up?" asked the Super Captain, frowning heavily. "Not sick?"

"Well, his forehead has a bump on it as big as a tomato. One of the gripmen steered a flat into him durin' a dark change. He was a sight for a dime museum. Serves him right, too, for gettin' in the way."

And the assistant checked off the number of the super who played the thinking part of a London bobby with infinite contempt.

"Holy Moses!" the Super Captain murmured, whistling softly. He looked ruefully at the fifty-odd supers who were crowding around, each anxious to get a nod of greeting from their great captain. Even the Super Captain had to acknowledge that they were

not a prepossessing lot. In "The Life of Sport" a great intellect or a distinguished presence on the part of the supers was not imperative. All they had to do was to walk to and fro, impersonating a shopping crowd on Bond Street, shout angrily at a welsher on the Derby scene, and to yell vociferously when the star knocked out a professional pugilist. Mr. Jones bitterly regretted that he had not transferred before the accident the gentlemanly ex-Harvard super to Baley's Theater, where the supernumeraries were a much more intelligent lot. At Baley's they had to make up, and they learned to walk the stage with some degree of unconsciousness. Indeed, the proudest boast of the Super Captain's was that three of "his boys" had risen to the dignity of receiving their pay at the front of the house, having been made regular members of Baley's company.

The Super Captain did not take any notice of his boys to-night. "The old man's worried," they whispered, just as they do at the Democratic Club when Mr. Croker is worried. Yes, Mr. Jones was greatly worried. He had given his word to Sir Roy and he

did not see how he could keep it. In the first place, he dared not take one of his more intelligent men from the important theaters at so short a notice. That would cause a row with the manager.

“Ah, there, Cap. ! Nice evening,”

The gloomy frown fled from the Super Captain's brow. He nodded at the speaker thoughtfully.

“Come here, Gus, I want to speak to you.”

The assistant opened the door of the room in which the overcoats of the supernumeraries were hung while engaged in their professional duties. The Super Captain and Super No. 5 passed within.

“The Life of Sport” had been running at the *Frivolity* for three months. Augustus Higgins, better known to the stage manager as Super No. 5, had been with the play since the first rehearsal. Although he was a great deal shorter than most of the men, and although his presence could not be regarded as distinguished under any circumstances, he had instantly been picked out by the Super Captain from among the several scores of applicants because of his extreme neatness. And the subsequent conduct of Super No.

5 had sustained this favorable impression. Super No. 5 never missed a performance. He was never under the influence of liquor. He was never quarrelsome, never impudent. He was always cheerful and anxious to please. He took as great interest in the success of the play as did the star who had a percentage of the profits. His property silk hat was never bumped in or brushed the wrong way, tilted too far back on his head, or crushed too far down over his ears. While other frivolous spirits played penny ante, Augustus Higgins was brushing his dress-suit or smoothing his silk hat. Somewhat timidly at first (since his fellows were both rough and jealous), but more boldly afterwards, his desire for dramatic honors led him to more ambitious flights. He waxed the ends of his mustache. He smeared his cheeks with grease paint—juvenile tint, number 7,—rubbed a little rouge on his chubby cheeks, put a black line with a toothpick under his eyes. And Augustus received his modest reward for these painstaking efforts. At the Super Captain's request he was singled out by the stage manager for "special business." During the Earl's

Court scene he sat at one of the tables away "down stage" among the principals. He stood three paces in front of the other herd of supers during the boxing scene. And lastly, he had been made deliriously happy by having four words to speak all by himself in a loud, triumphant voice, "The bets ! The bets !" With this last unparalleled honor Augustus Higgins had rested content. His imagination could conceive of no greater advancement.

But to-night he was to be made a Queen's Envoy Extraordinary.

Because the Super Captain was determined not to disappoint Sir Roy. And he was equally determined not to disappoint himself. His jewel of a super was not available. But Augustus would make a very creditable paste jewel. Mr. Jones knew very well that people do not detect clever imitations as readily as they flatter themselves. And even supposing that Sir Roy or the Queen decided that Super No. 5 would not suit, there was nothing to be lost by the effort. So he acquainted the astonished Augustus with the honor that was to be his.

"Now, Gussie, do you think you can do it? Have you got the nerve?" asked the Super Captain, eyeing his favorite super narrowly. "Because if you haven't, say so, and I'll get some one else."

Super No. 5 gasped three times and blinked at his boss twice. Then he drew himself up to his extreme height of five feet six and answered with undaunted front:

"Sure, Cap., nerve enough to punch the manager's eye if you say the word."

"Oh, it ain't as bad as that, Higgins. All you'll have to do is to keep a stiff upper lip and bluff like the deuce. I guess you'll manage the thing in good shape, but I must say, Gussie, no offense to you of course, but I wish you was a few inches higher."

"I may be short, Cap.," said Augustus with dignity, "but what there is of me is solid, sir."

"All right, Gus. But there's no time to talk. We've got to be seein' about your togs. Let's have a look at your dress-suit."

Super No. 5 eagerly fetched it from the dressing-room, and held it out for his chief's inspection.

"You can go through all the bunch, Cap., and you wont find its beat. Not a crease in it, not a stain. And look at this hat. There ain't a shinier or less battered in the theater."

But the Super Captain shook his head.

"That suit may be all very well for a super here at the *Frivolity*, Gus, but it won't go up at the Rotterdam. It ain't the thing for a high-toned envoy. Now we haven't much time to lose. We must see about gettin' another."

"Where are we goin' to?" asked Augustus, his bosom swelling with pride as he noted the envious glances cast at him by the other supers.

"Round the corner to Third Avenue to hire a swell dress-suit. You may as well put that silk hat on, though, because you are going to act the envoy indoors, and they won't see the hat. Have you got some studs and cuff buttons?"

Augustus sorrowfully confessed that he was not possessed of those luxuries.

"Well, you can use mine. But mind they're come-backs, Gus."

"Come-backs, they are, Cap.," promised Augustus.

The establishment before which the Super Captain and the Envoy Extraordinary-elect halted was made conspicuous by three glittering gilded balls. "No, not in the hock shop," said the Super Captain, as Augustus in his eagerness was bursting into the "Ladies' Entrance." "It's up stairs." And as Augustus looked up he saw a sign, "Full Dress-Suits to Hire."

A great many suits were displayed before the Captain's critical taste was satisfied.

"I won't have 'em too big or too small, Isaacs," he threatened. "I won't have 'em tight and I won't have 'em loose. I won't have 'em greasy and I won't have 'em frayed. You can talk all you're a mind to, but I've got to have an A 1 article for this job."

So after Mr. Isaacs had expostulated volubly on the beauties of many garments, he brought forth his trump suit—one less shabby at the elbows, less shiny at the seams, and less baggy in the rear than the rest, and the Super Captain condescended to express a dubious approval.

"It vas new, so helup me, cracious !" cried Mr. Isaacs, caressing it fondly.

"Well, you fool," grumbled the Super Captain, "why didn't you bring out that one at first ? I told you I wanted a new one."

"But it vas less reesk if you tak' vone of dose," said Mr Isaacs with a crafty smile as he indicated the heap of discarded garments. "He vill come back to-night ?"

Mr. Isaacs pointed anxiously towards a curtain behind which Augustus was putting on the dress-suit.

"I don't know about to-night, Isaacs," replied the Super Captain, lighting a cigar. "But he will be back here with it by eight o'clock to-morrow, sure. You hear that, Gus ? To-morrow morning at eight o'clock sharp."

"If eet vas not, I get a varrant," threatened Mr. Isaacs, wildy waving his arms.

"You hear, Gus ?" cried Mr. Jones. "If you don't get it back the old sheeney gets a warrant."

"Eight o'clock it is, Cap.," promised Augustus cheerfully, emerging from behind the curtain. "How's the fit ?"

"O mein Gott, it vas magneeficent!" cried Mr. Isaacs in ecstasy.

"It'll do," remarked the Super Captain. "And now, Gus, I guess there's time for you to have a shine at Tony's, and then we'll pack you off in a hansom to the hotel."

Under the Super Captain's eye, the blacking was deftly applied to cover up a yawning crack in the left shoe. A hansom was hailed. Augustus Higgins, his knees shaking and his palms clammy with excitement, seated himself inside. The Super Captain clasped his hand:

"Now, Gus, I expect you to do me and yourself proud. You ain't nervous, are you?"

He looked at Super No. 5 as anxiously as a trainer does a prize-fighter before the fray.

"No more than's nat'ral, Cap.," stammered Augustus.

"Well, pull yourself together. Be a man. The bloomin' swells ain't goin' to eat you. Keep your wits together and your mouth shut and remember you're an actor. Just explain to Mr. Poplar, will you, that I

couldn't send the man I promised because he's hurt. And say, Gus, get the dough from Mr. Poplar, cash down. The Queen ain't particular good pay. So long."

The cabman cracked his whip. And Augustus Higgins, late Super No. 5, but now Envoy Extraordinary from Prince Geoffrey de La Fleur to Queen Angelica of the Dutch Fraus, sank back in his seat in a half-dazed, half-exultant state of collapse.

CHAPTER VII.

HIGGINS BECOMES M. MONTMORENCEY.

AFTER Sir Roy's compact with the Super Captain, he had returned to his fiancée in the highest spirits, and had regaled her with a rosy-hued description of the gem of an envoy that Mr. Jones had promised to send them.

"Why, my dear, upon my word," cried Sir Roy jubilantly, "he'll be probably more of a success than a real envoy himself would have been. A Harvard man, my love; six feet tall; the good looks of Apollo with the grace of a Chesterfield; the clothes of a Bond Street tailor, and the distinction of a Bayard. No one, not even the lynx-eyed Vice-Queen herself, will dream there's anything wrong. Angel, give me a kiss to reward me."

"A dozen, you ducky," cried the Queen, as she showered a stream of kisses on the lips of the willing

recipient. "If anything had happened so that they guessed that there wasn't any envoy in the 123 suite, resting his gouty and aristocratic limbs in lordly ease on the sofa, well, I should have gone into St. Vitus' dance with vexation. I know I should. But with an envoy such as you describe—distinguished, handsome, cultured—in a word, a gentleman—oh, Roy, how I love you."

Now had the Queen and her lover kept this rosy-hued ideal to themselves, they would assuredly have been grievously disappointed when the ideal vanished into thin air at the appearance in the flesh of Augustus Higgins, Super No. 5.

But, most unfortunately, this disillusionment was to be the very least of their woes, because the Queen could not resist the temptation of crowing over the Vice-Queen by dilating upon the charms of the Envoy Extraordinary, who was supposed by the Vice-Queen and all the other members of the Dutch Fraus to be at that moment in suite 123. Nor could Sir Roy resist the furious onslaught of pointed and ingenious questions hurled at him by half a dozen eager reporters

regarding the personal appearance and characteristics of the great guest. So that both reporters and members of the Dutch Fraus and all the invited guests were eager to see the paragon of perfection, the admirable Crichton, that each one of them conjured up in his or her mind's eye.

If the Queen and Sir Roy could only quietly smuggle the expected ex-Harvard man in suite 123, they both felt that their troubles would have a fair chance of being a thing of the past.

And now everything was in readiness. All there was to be done was to wait patiently for the hour when the envoy was to arrive.

In the grand ball-room the invited guests were assembled. They craned their necks expectantly out of the boxes. They stood on tiptoe and looked over one another's heads, seated five deep around the room. The members of the Dutch Fraus took up their positions according to the previous rehearsals. The heralds, and all those appointed to receive the Queen, stood in picturesque confusion about the throne. The electric light shed just the proper artistic warmth

upon the scene. It was a picture resplendent and magnificent enough to arouse the envy of a real monarch himself. The Queen's immediate suite, her lords and ladies-in-waiting, were crowded in apartment 121.

In apartment 122, that next to 123, the rooms reserved for the Envoy Extraordinary, the Queen and the Vice-Queen were waiting.

"Heavens, darling," cried Angelica to the Vice-Queen, "what are you doing there?"

"I am listening at the keyhole," replied the frivolous Vice-Queen, "to see if I can't hear the Envoy moving. But I can't hear a sound. And there's only two folding doors between his apartments and this room. Do you suppose that he is asleep? If he is, he doesn't snore."

"I am grieved and shocked that you should listen at keyholes. And the word 'snore,' my love, is not a well-bred word for a Vice-Queen to use."

The Vice-Queen blushed. "Miss Propriety," she muttered scornfully. Then aloud, "But I am anxious, dear. I so long to see your wonderful envoy. Do you suppose we shall find him nice?"

"I am sure *I* shall find him nice," replied the Queen, complacently. "I have already told you, love, he is tall, very, *very* distinguished, handsome, and *most* refined. Those are the precise words of my—of Sir Roy, I mean."

"If it isn't her proprieties, or her crown, it's her lover," muttered the Vice-Queen to herself once more. "And is he foreign-looking? French, of course. How glad I am I speak French."

The Queen turned pale. Oh, how foolish they had been! Here was a new complication. They had never once thought that of course the Envoy of a French Prince would be expected to speak French. And then the Queen remembered how cultured a supernumerary they were expecting. No doubt he would be able to speak the language. Not very fluently, perhaps, but fluently enough to mutter a few words. He could pretend to have the toothache, or to have a very severe cold. And just as soon as the ceremony was over, Sir Roy would see that he was sent away. So she answered quite composedly:

"French, no doubt, my love, but not necessarily

so. As I told you, I have had only the merest glimpse of him."

"How queer it is," said the Vice-Queen, smoothing out her gown, but watching Angelica closely the while, "that your description does not at all agree with that of Mr. Locke, the manager of the hotel, who saw him this afternoon when he arrived. Mr. Locke assures me he is not at all distinguished, but short and rather thick-set, florid in the face, and with side-whiskers. His clothes didn't fit him at all well, Mr. Locke said. In fact, Mr. Locke said he did not answer to his ideal of what an Envoy should be."

Queen Angelica shuddered. The manager had described the purser.

"Mr. Locke, I fear, is not so favorable to the society as I could wish," she replied, making a supreme effort not to look anxious. "I fear he is prejudiced. He could have had but the merest glimpse of him."

"Yes, that's just what Mr. Locke said: 'Any one would think that you were ashamed of your envoy, you sneak him up without any one's having a good chance to have a look at him.' That's what Mr. Locke said," remarked the Vice-Queen, sweetly.

"Really, my love, I am wearied of hearing what Mr. Locke said."

The Queen yawned pretentiously.

"And she never has enough manners to cover her mouth before me," commented the dissatisfied rival.

And then the door opened abruptly. Sir Roy entered distraught. His eyes were wild. Sheer despair sat upon his brow. The Queen pressed her hands to her breast. She rose and faced him, troubled but undaunted.

"My sweet Angelica," he stammered, "I must speak to you alone, my dear. Something has happened."

The Vice-Queen's eyes gleamed expectantly and triumphantly. Any one could see that something very serious had happened. And she rejoiced.

The Queen felt the inquisitive eyes of her jealous rival simply boring through her. She could have screamed with anxiety. But she answered without a tremor in her voice:

"I trust, Roy dear, that the Envoy is not worse?"

"Yes," stammered Sir Roy. "He is very ill. That's just it. He has told me to tell you something."

At this very lucid explanation the Queen turned calmly to her rival: "If you please, my love."

The baffled Vice-Queen bounced out of the room, banging the door angrily behind her. Queen Angelica promptly turned the key.

"What is it?" she hissed, turning to her prostrate fiancé. "Is it the Envoy? He has not come?"

Sir Roy groaned.

"Yes, he's come. And oh, my dear girl, I'm an awful fool."

"I've known that all along," said the Queen savagely.

"I wish you'd kick me, Sweet," implored Sir Roy.

"I wish you'd go on," urged the Queen, shaking him.

"I was waiting for the Envoy, you know, outside the door, so as to let him slip in his rooms without any one noticing him. And all the reporters were out there in the corridor, and they began to pump me. I couldn't resist the temptation, so I described to them the magnificent appearance of the Envoy, just as the Super Captain described him to me."

“And,” added the Queen grimly, “just as I’ve described him to that creature who was in here. And isn’t he anything like that?”

“Like that!” echoed Sir Roy, looking at the Queen pityingly. “Oh, my dear girl! While the reporters were taking notes—I confess I exaggerated a little and drew on my imagination—I noticed a miserable little wretch, very ill at ease and horribly nervous, wandering unhappily up and down the corridor. He was in evening clothes. But such evening clothes, Angel. Such a fit!”

“Well, well?” cried the Queen impatiently.

“And then, out of the corner of my eye, just as I was expatiating on the splendor of our Envoy Extraordinary to the reporters, I saw him go up to the door of 123 and knock.”

“Great heavens!” murmured the Queen. “I wish you would go on, and not make me crazy with suspense.”

“He knocked, and then he sneaked away timidly. I was wondering what the fellow could be, and what he wanted, when I saw him slide up again, more

boldly this time, and knock again. Then it dawned on me, like an awful nightmare, that that fellow was the Envoy. How I got him into the room, I don't know. But I did. Yes, he's in there now. I locked him in, as I did the purser, until I could see you. Oh, my poor Angelica !”

Queen Angelica wasted no time in words. She rushed over to where the Vice-Queen had been impertinently listening, threw open the folding doors that led between the two suites of rooms, and entered.

“There it is,” said Sir Roy pointing.

Yes, there he stood, Augustus Higgins, Super No. 5, in the dress-suit of Mr. Isaacs, the property silk hat of the Frivolity Theater in his hand, nervously pulling his cuffs down over his wrists to show off the links of the Super Captain. His left foot was modestly retiring behind the right to hide the crack, which was yet conspicuous in spite of the labors of Tony the bootblack. He did not feel happy. Somehow he was vaguely conscious that the dress-suit was not nearly so resplendent here at the hotel as it had seemed at the shop of Mr. Isaacs.

As the angry Queen glared at him, Augustus pulled down his cuffs still lower over his red wrists, made a step backward, ducked his head in a pitiful attempt at a bow, wrinkled up his chubby face in a yet more pitiful attempt at a sickening, fatuous grin, and said in a piping, high tenor voice of a decidedly nasal quality:

"Good evening, ma'am. I suppose you're the Queen. I'm the Envoy."

"Support me, Roy," wailed the Queen. "I'm going to faint."

Augustus was vaguely conscious that something was wrong. He glanced at himself in the pier glass, picked off a piece of thread from the dress-suit, and asked mildly:

"Don't the lady feel well?"

Queen Angelica was in fact on the verge of hysteria. The crown of gilt and velvet had fallen off her royal head. She was wriggling convulsively in the arms of her devoted lover.

"Angel, my dear, dear girl, brace up!" he implored.

"Shall I get a doctor, sir?" asked the Envoy, obligingly.

"No. Go away, you—you monster!" shrieked the Queen.

The Envoy Extraordinary, a trifle hurt, retreated to the far end of the room, and regarded the two in meek remonstrance.

"My dear love," implored the ever faithful Sir Roy, "think of the reporters outside. We must do something."

"Let the reporters say what they will," screamed the Queen, excitedly. "I am crushed! I am defeated! I surrender! I abdicate my throne on the spot!"

"Then think of me, dearest."

"You! Why should I think of you? It's myself I've to think of."

"Then think of the Vice-Queen," continued Sir Roy, reproachfully. "Think how she'll gloat. I believe she is outside listening. And hush, there's the music, my dear. They are going to begin. Great guns, what shall we do?"

When Sir Roy had mentioned the Vice-Queen, the eyelids of the Queen flickered twice. Now she gave one last convulsive wriggle, relaxed her limbs, stiffened with horror, and languidly opened her eyes.

"I suppose it isn't your fault," said the Queen, after she had gazed at the discomfited Augustus, who stood in a far corner of the room, twirling his property hat nervously around the forefinger of his left hand. "But that atrocious Super Captain ! I shall never forgive him."

"Oh, it ain't the Cap.'s fault, ma'am, I do assure you," cried Super No. 5 eagerly. "The man the Cap. was goin' to send has had his head bumped, ma'am. I know I can't hold a candle to him, ma'am, but I'll do my best, if you give me a chance. The Cap. says if you don't think I'll suit, you can fire me back, and there's no bones broke, ma'am."

"I must think, I must think," muttered the distracted Queen.

"Silence, fellow !" commanded Sir Roy, looking at his inamorata anxiously.

"I will not succumb to the jeers of my enemies,

Roy. It is too late to go backwards. We must go forwards, even if we have to drag that man with us."

"You won't have to drag me, ma'am," promised Augustus cheerfully. "You'll find I'll be able to keep up with the procession, ma'am."

"There is nothing for it but to declare to all that the Envoy Extraordinary is seriously indisposed. That is why you called me in here, Roy, so hurriedly."

"Then ain't I goin' to play the Envoy Extraordinary? Don't I suit, ma'am?" asked Higgins, anxiously.

"You are going to be the deputy Envoy. Your master is supposed to be reclining on that bed there seriously indisposed with a severe attack of gout. Do you understand?"

Augustus looked at the empty bed, a little puzzled.

"Well, I can't say as I quite catch on, miss."

"Listen, stupid!" impatiently interrupted Sir Roy.

"Look here, mister, I may be an Envoy and a super, but I don't let folks call me stoopid and feller!" said Augustus with spirit.

"No, he shan't," promised the Queen soothingly.

"Now please listen to me Mr. Mr.—I think I don't know your name."

"Higgins, Augustus Higgins," replied Super No. 5, "at your service." But he still looked sulkily at Sir Roy.

"Higgins," murmured poor Angelica, smiling faintly. "That name will never do for an envoy. It must be De Vere Montmorencey. It's simply a more suitable name, that's all," she added hastily, as she thought she saw the brow of Augustus wrinkle in ominous rebellion. "Do you think you can remember that name, Mr. Montmorencey?"

"I'll try," replied Augustus. "But I can't help feelin' that you're kinder ashamed of me, ma'am. It seems to me Higgins is a name good enough for a king, so far as that goes."

"So it is," said the Queen. "Only Montmorencey happens to be more fitted for a French Envoy, that's all. I suppose you don't know any French, Monsieur Montmorencey?"

"Not a great deal," confessed Super No. 5. "But maybe I can pan out with a kind of pigeon French."

"Pigeon French? What's that, Hig—Montmorencey?" demanded Sir Roy.

"It's a little of each, sir. A good deal of English and a little French. Most of it's English with a French twang."

"Then if your French is not very fluent," said the Queen, "I would advise you to only pretend to speak when you are supposed to be making the speech at the throne. Now listen, Montmorencey, and I'll tell you precisely what you have to do. You are De Vere Montmorencey, as I said. You are the secretary to the Envoy Extraordinary, who is confined sick in this room. You cannot be the Envoy Extraordinary himself for the simple reason that we have described him as a person much taller than yourself. You will simply have to advance to the throne on which I shall be sitting. You will have this casket in your hand. You will give it to me. Then you will pretend to make a speech. Roy will see that the band is playing loud enough to drown out what you say, so you can speak the first words that come into your head. Only be sure you mumble them. Now you are sure you understand about the Envoy Extraordinary, your master?"

"Yes, ma'am. He's supposed to be lyin' on that there bed sick, just as I'm supposed to be takin' his place as his deputy Envoy, and just as you're supposed to be a real queen."

The Queen winced.

"Very well. Sir Roy will direct you in all. Keep your eyes on him. The people will be getting impatient. I must be going."

"And here's your crown, ma'am," said Augustus, picking it up from the floor. "But I'm afraid it's dented, ma'am."

He brushed off the dust with the sleeve of his coat, and handed it to the Queen deferentially.

"Thank you," said the Queen graciously. "And now I really must be going. I shall see you again at the throne, Monsieur Montmorency."

"So long, ma'am," said Augustus genially, waving his hands.

"Speak to no one," were the Queen's parting cautions. "Hold up your head. Be sure you don't get in front of me so as to hide me from the people. Don't keep pulling down your cuffs like that. It's

ill-bred. Remember that you are a great personage, Mr. Higg—Montmorencey, and endeavor to look just as dignified and impressive as you possibly can."

"You can bet on my doin' me level best, ma'am," promised Augustus solemnly.

Very quietly the Queen went into the adjoining suite of rooms and locked the folding doors after her. Then she opened the door that led out into the corridor and called softly to the impatient Vice-Queen.

"What in the world is the matter?" cried the Queen's rival, who was simply burning up with curiosity.

"A great calamity," replied the Queen hurriedly, "has befallen us. His Excellency, the Envoy-in-chief is seriously indisposed, and cannot be present at the ceremony. He has had to delegate to his secretary the task of conferring upon me the decoration of St. Martha."

"Is he in bed?"

"Yes."

"You don't mean to say you have been in that room seeing him, Queen; and he in bed?" exclaimed the Vice-Queen, in affected horror.

"Certainly not," replied the Queen haughtily. "My Roy has seen him, of course, and has told me everything. I must ask you please to permit me to set the etiquette of this court. If I chose to be alone with him at the North Pole it would be perfectly proper, if I set the example. Please remember the motto: The Queen can do no wrong, and hold your tongue. Is the procession formed?"

"Yes," answered the subdued Vice-Queen, sulkily.

"And is my crown on straight?"

"Yes, I suppose so," ungraciously admitted the Vice-Queen.

"Then let the heralds blow their trumpets to announce the entrance of myself and court."

The heralds lifted the trumpets to their lips, and shouted, "Welcome to our gracious Queen!" The pages lifted the Queen's train and let the thirteen feet of satin sag gracefully in the middle. The band played; the Dutch Fraus bowed; the guests craned their necks; and the Queen, calm and serene as if all were well, marched into the ball-room, at the head of her court, and minced down the lane made by the reverently admiring throng.

And in suite 123 Sir Roy poured instructions into the ears of De Vere Montmorencey, né Higgins, who listened to the flare of the trumpets, the blare of the band, and the words of Sir Roy in a maze of bewilderment and of heart-quaking nervousness.

CHAPTER VIII.

HATS OFF TO THE ENVOY !

“WELL, Montmorency, you think you understand perfectly ?” asked Sir Roy, when he had thoroughly explained all the things that seemed necessary.

“I think so, sir,” replied Augustus, giving a pull at his cuffs.

“Didn’t the Queen tell you that it was bad form to do that ?” admonished Sir Roy, impatiently. “And that dress-suit ! Any one would think you got it on Third Avenue.”

“That’s just where the Super Captain did get it, sir,” asserted Augustus, cheerfully.

“Third Avenue ! Heavens ! Hark ! That was a tap on the door, wasn’t it ? I’m going to announce you, Higgins. Keep cool. And don’t stand in the doorway so the reporters can see you when I open the door. Go into the bed-room with your chief. Lock the door after I’m gone.”

Sir Roy quietly unlocked the door, Augustus retreating to the bed-room until his employer had closed it; then he came back in the sitting-room and locked it again, according to Sir Roy's instructions.

The reporters clamored about the latter, anxious for details.

"Look here, Mr. Poplar," cried one of the reporters who had been on the dock when the escape had been made from the *Paris*, "you promised us an interview with the Envoy. What's the matter with him? Is he made of glass? Does he break when you look at him?"

Sir Roy held up his hand for silence.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you cannot see the Envoy. It is impossible."

"What, isn't there going to be any parade—I mean function?" asked the reporter, indignantly.

"If you refer, sir, to the conferring of the Order of St. Martha on Queen Angelica, yes," replied Sir Roy, angrily.

"Then why can't we see the Envoy?"

"Simply because the Envoy-in-chief is suffering

with a severe attack of the gout and is not able to leave his chamber. The secretary is to perform the ceremony instead."

"What's the name of the deputy, Mr. Poplar?"

"De Vere Montmorencey."

"French, of course?"

"But speaks English fluently. And now, gentlemen, I must beg of you to let me pass."

"What," chorused the reporters, "without any more facts, Mr. Poplar? It's a shame!"

"Without a glimpse of his nobs?"

"And they haven't given us any tickets, and the flunkey in the cocked hat at the door won't let us in, sir."

"I will see that you have a very good view of the ceremony, if you will follow me, gentlemen."

Sir Roy led the way upstairs to a little gallery generally occupied by the musicians. The reporters, despairing of any interview either with the Envoy-in-chief or with his deputy, at least until after the ceremony, crowded after him.

"Here you will have a splendid view," he remarked, bowing himself out, and closing the door.

"And we're crowded like pigs in a poke," grumbled a reporter.

"Yes," chuckled Sir Roy, "and you are separated, my goats, from the sheep. You will have no opportunity to interview our hired Envoy, either. Before I unlock this door again he will be off into oblivion. I turn the key so."

And the treacherous Sir Roy turned the key on the guileless reporters. They were entrapped. As harmless as turtle doves for the present.

In the meanwhile Queen Angelica was casting a sweeping glance from her throne at her court of nine grown men, thirty women, and twenty-two children. She was surprised to see Sir Roy approach her, evidently anxious to speak with her. She beckoned to him majestically with her fan to draw near.

"Why this delay, Roy," she whispered crossly. "We are getting impatient. The supper is growing cold. The guests are yawning. My knees are cramped."

"I just wanted to tell you, my dear," whispered back Sir Roy, "that I've locked the reporters in the gallery up there, so they can't interview Higgins."

"You needn't have bothered me with this now. The news would have kept. And speak lower, that Vice-Queen is listening."

"Yes, my dear, but I was going to suggest that I let the Envoy put on my court suit. He hired his dress-suit on Third Avenue. I know you wouldn't want to contaminate the happy ceremony with a suit hired on Third Avenue."

"You are a thoughtful boy, Roy. By all means dress him up in your court suit. But do be quick. I'm hungry for the applause of the people, and to see that doll-faced creature turn green with envy."

"Here," commanded Sir Roy, returning to the room in which Augustus was waiting, "take off that suit, and put on these breeches."

"Why, sir, ain't this here dress-suit stylish enough?" he asked, somewhat disappointedly. "It cost three dollars to hire it, sir. It seems a pity to waste it."

But when he was arrayed in the silk stockings, the satin coat, the court breeches, the powdered wig, and the sword, especially when he substituted a gorgeous

pair of patent leathers with silver buckles for his own cracked shoes, he admitted gratefully that the change was a welcome one.

“By gum,” he said, as he tried to look at his back in the glass, “I look like a real actor, don’t I, sir?”

“Mind that sword doesn’t get between your legs when you march to the throne,” cautioned Sir Roy. “And don’t go pulling at the lace of your sleeves. They aren’t cuffs, you booby.”

“All right, sir; I feel like a high-toned sort of guy this time for fair. I know how a dook feels now.”

“That’s the way to feel,” cordially encouraged Sir Roy. “You can’t have the feelings of a person too high in rank to play the part well. Feel like a pope or a king while you’re about it. Now I’m going to introduce you.”

Then the pages and the heralds and the lords and ladies-in-waiting who had been languishing about the throne, rose to their feet.

Sir Roy advanced toward the throne. The ladies-in-waiting stepped aside from the ermine rug to give the Queen the center of the stage. She extended her hand. Sir Roy kissed it reverently.

"Madame Queen, an audience is demanded by M. Montmorencey, the Envoy of Prince Geoffrey de La Fleur."

Smiling graciously, the Queen arose from her throne, giving a secret kick to her train.

"We are pleased to receive his Royal Highness's commands," said the Queen.

"Welcome to M. Montmorencey, the Envoy Extraordinary of His Royal Highness, Prince Geoffrey de La Fleur!" cried the heralds, placing the trumpets to their ruby lips.

Augustus Higgins trembled visibly when Sir Roy threw open the door and beckoned to him to advance.

"I feel bloomin' like runnin' away, sir," he whispered to Sir Roy, who had come forward to meet him.

"Nonsense," sharply rebuked Sir Roy. "Remember who you are and brace up. Take my arm."

That was precisely the trouble. Augustus did remember who he was—a common, everyday supernumerary, and he didn't feel comfortable. A hundred electric lights dazzled his eyes. Half a thousand guests dazzled his senses. It was difficult for him to

reach up gracefully to Sir Roy's arm, and he had the appearance of hanging on it. The sword persisted in getting between his legs. The people buzzed a welcome. The band was playing "Hail to the Chief." The reporters were laughing up in the gallery. And so Augustus, under the guidance of Sir Roy, pursued his erratic way to the throne.

First of all came a page, in sky-blue tights, bearing on high a red-plush cushion, hung with cords and tassels, quite as plump and gorgeous as any pulpit affair, and nestling on its downy surface was the casket of ribbons and plush containing the coveted Order of St. Martha.

Then followed two other pages in variegated tights. And then, as Lord High Chancellor, an old gentleman who should have known better, an old gentleman with a long, white beard, a scarlet gown, and an ermine cape. He waved his wand and pranced after the pages in the greatest enthusiasm, and in decidedly reckless abandon, all the while admonishing the pages in front to go slowly but not so domned slow.

And then, the observed of all observers, came Au-

gustus Higgins, Super No. 5, alias De Vere Montmorency, clinging terrified and quite overcome with stage-fright, to Sir Roy's sustaining arm.

"We are almost there, Montmorency, old chap," soothingly whispered Sir Roy. "Jove, how your knees are shaking. You are out of step. Do you hear, change step. Here, I'll change step instead. Can't you take a longer stride? The sword's between your legs again."

The last admonition was given too late. The Envoy Extraordinary slipped violently on the the waxed floor, to the Queen's infinite chagrin and the delight of the malicious Vice-Queen.

"Now is the time for disappearing," she giggled to one of the ladies-in-waiting.

"What is this show, anyway?" asked one of the irrepressible reporters, "an opera bouffe, a masked ball, a tableau vivant, or a dance at the lunatic asylum?"

"No," answered another reporter, "it's a giddy, glittering, wildly incoherent pageant and jumble of a circus parade, that's what it is."

"And that Envoy himself," grumbled another reporter, "I must say he isn't so much of a muchness. I'll bet dollars to pickles that he wasn't made in France."

Sir Roy, very red in the face, hauled the humiliated Envoy to his feet.

"But when the sky is clearing, then is the time for reappearing," giggled the Vice-Queen, convulsively.

They were standing before the throne.

"I am pleased to meet the Envoy of His Royal Highness," murmured the Queen.

Sir Roy nudged Augustus in the ribs. Augustus took the bauble offered him by the page from its plump cushion, and cleared his throat.

"Hush, he's going to make a speech," whispered the guests.

"Say something, you idiot. Anything, everything, nothing," whispered Sir Roy, savagely.

Augustus did say anything, everything, nothing.

"Parlez-vous Français?" muttered his blanched lips. "Hawaii, Venezuela, Prince go-ahead, the flower."

"Splendid!" whispered Sir Roy. "Keep it up."

Thus encouraged, Augustus plunged on: "Ex pluribus unum Dickery dickery dock——"

"Louder!" shouted the reporters in the gallery, fiddling with their pencils and pads.

Augustus licked his lips and continued his jumble of geographical names, proper names, and nursery rhymes, not louder, but even more fluently:

"Santiago de Cuba Illolilio Guggenheimer, Sahara Desert and Midway Plaisance, the pussv fell into the well!"

The Queen gazed placidly around at her subjects, and waved her fan slowly in majestic triumph. The guests strained their ears to no purpose; the reporters called louder to no purpose. Augustus had slidden smoothly on to the diseases of the human body:

"Appendicitis, bronchitis, larinyxgitis, gangrene, peritonitis, Order of St. Martha."

(Loud applause, as Augustus pauses for breath. Applause led off by the enthusiastic Sir Roy at an admonitory wink from the Queen).

"Queen Angelica," continued Augustus, refreshed

by the long breath and the applause, "parlez-vous Français, ici habla Espagnol."

"Why, he must be talking real French, because I can't understand a word of it," whispered the Vice-Queen to the lady-in-waiting. "These Frenchmen talk so fast. But I don't believe that she can understand either."

"De Vere Montmorencey, Super Captain Frivolity Theater Richard Croker, Tarrytown-on-Hudson, Kalamazoo Aguinaldo Isaacsstein Y. M. C. A., Order of St. Martha of Mt. Ararat, Queen Angelica la-la-la-la-la-la."

With this peroration of magnificent rubbish, Sir Roy brought his remarkable speech to a conclusion. And if words of pearl had dropped from his lips, they could not possibly have been hailed with more frantic applause, this time led off by the merry old gentleman of the scarlet coat.

"And now, dear Mr. Hig—Montmorencey, put the order around my neck, and please be sure that you don't catch any of my hairs or ruffle my bangs."

Tremulously Augustus opened the casket, and tore

from its wrappings the Order. The Queen stood motionless, her slender neck bowed to receive the yoke. Augustus stood on tiptoe, and raised himself to his full height of five feet seven. With a desperate swing of his short but willing arms he flashed the Order over her royal shoulder. Then seven ladies-in-waiting applied seven safety pins to make it secure.

Augustus stood silent, his head bowed reverently, his eyes fixed on the white satin slippers of the Queen.

"There's a roll in the casket," whispered Sir Roy. "Give her that."

"It's French, you see," were the Queen's gracious words, as the ladies-in-waiting pressed about her eager to read.

"It's lovely," murmured the double-faced Vice-Queen, throwing herself on the Queen's neck, and showering deceitful kisses on her majesty.

Queen Angelica responded to this hysterical oscular demonstration but coldly. She knew perfectly well that the Vice-Queen's pretense of affection was purely for stage effect and to show off her bonnet of royal purple and baby blue. And she was sure that the

Vice-Queen knew that this bonnet of purple and baby blue was a distinct infringement of her own patent rights to royal color. So the Queen turned away her cheek and had speedy recourse to her smelling salts.

“ I wonder what’s on the programme next ? ” asked a reporter making note of all these things. “ Look at that clown of an Envoy, will you ? Don’t he sit on that seat by the Queen with the grace of a bag of potatoes ? ”

That was not because Augustus Higgins could help it, but because the sub-throne by the side of the Queen was raised too high from the ermine rug for his feet to touch the floor. He had no hassock as did the Queen. It is hard to sit gracefully under those circumstances.

Queen Angelica did not allow any halt to take place at this juncture of the proceedings. She was afraid that some officious Dutch Frau would attempt to air off her French on the Envoy. So she whispered to Sir Roy, and an ordinary nineteenth century bell-boy of the Rotterdam rolled up the ermine rug that was spread before the throne, and carried it away, very

much as do the circus employes before the elephant is brought in.

Then the electrician turned on dozens of electric lights of prismatic colors, and a flood of effulgence glowed on the throne and the crown and the spangles and silver and gold; and the pages and the lords and ladies-in-waiting began a slow and stately minuet, the Queen and Augustus looking on from the two thrones.

"Isn't it magnificent?" whispered the Queen. "Really, Montmorencey, you have done better than I expected."

"It's out of sight, ma'am," sighed Augustus in an awed voice. "I must say that this here pomp and glitter suits me right down to the ground. I feel that I was cut out for this sort of thing, ma'am."

"I am glad you are enjoying it," said the Queen graciously. "But don't keep your mouth open so wide, Montmorencey; it's bad form and its unhygienic."

Augustus feasted his eyes on the Queen's magnificent gown. He wondered at the varied costumes of

the guests and of the Dutch Fraus, some of the era of William the Conqueror, some in the trappings of the time of Louis XV, some in honest buff and blue, the dress of the stalwart men who signed the Declaration of Independence and fought that these United States should be free from all the fancies of a foolish, gaudy court and the whims of a yet more foolish monarch, ruling by the mere accident of hereditary right. He wondered why the ladies had queer little pieces of black sticking-plaster on their faces and chests, and whether the patches had the same effect as mustard plasters in cases of mild pleurisy.

"Yes, ma'am, it's a great show," he sighed again. "*E-mense ! Simply e-mense !*"

"And now, Roy, I think Montmorencey had better go," whispered the Queen. "And be sure that the reporters do not get at him."

"No fear of that, my dear. They are locked up in that gallery until I choose to let them out. Now then, Higgins, give the Queen a good hearty farewell salaam, and say good-night, and be careful of that sword this time. Don't clutch my arm so tight. It's all black and blue."

“And don’t tread all over my train,” admonished the Queen. “And be sure you don’t stand so as to hide me from the sight of the people.”

“Oh, isn’t the Envoy going to stay to supper ?” asked the ladies-in-waiting, as Augustus clutched the arm of Sir Roy for the retreat from the room.

“No, my dears,” blandly replied the Queen. “You see he’s a vegetarian and a total abstainer, and his principles wouldn’t allow him to enjoy the supper. Then he is so anxious to get back to his chief to tell him all about the ceremony. I felt it would be cruel to detain him.”

“Great Cæsar, he’s going !” howled the reporters, making a bolt for the door as Sir Roy led the pseudo-envoy out of the ball-room.

“Hurry up, Higgins,” whispered Sir Roy, savagely, as he cast an anxious glance up at the gallery. “That pack of wolves will find they’re locked in before another five seconds. Then if they get at you, the cat will be out of the bag with a vengeance. Step up lively now.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE ENVOY CRIES FOR MORE.

ONCE outside the ball-room, Sir Roy did not stop until they had reached the elevator.

“Good-night, my dear fellow,” he said hurriedly, as he pressed the button. “So sorry to pack you off in this unceremonious fashion. I would have the servants give you a glass of champagne and some salad; but these reporters, you know. I don’t dare let them out until you are gone. You understand that, of course. Good-bye. Good-night.”

But Augustus mildly refused to be dismissed in this peremptory fashion. Not only was his dignity sadly ruffled, but the Super Captain had given him explicit instructions not to return without payment for his distinguished and unique services. These instructions he intended to carry out. So he held Sir Roy confidentially by a button of his waistcoat, and with his head on one side, addressed him thus:

"But you've forgot something, sir."

"Forgotten? Forgotten?" repeated Sir Roy, nervously. "Oh, certainly, Higgins." He held out a dollar bill. "Tip, you mean."

The little ex-pseudo-envoy drew himself up with the hauteur of a prince and put his hands behind his back.

"No, sir, not by a long shot."

"Well, what?" demanded Sir Roy, trying to wrench himself away.

"My boss, the Super Captain. He's got to be paid spot cash."

"Oh, I'll attend to him later," promised Sir Roy. "Here, don't tear off that button, Higgins."

"No, sir, that won't do," insisted Augustus, hanging desperately to the waitscoat button. "Beggin' your humble pardon and the Queen's humble pardon, sir, the boss says the Queen's bad pay."

"You are an impudent fellow," said Sir Roy, growing very red in the face. "I am disappointed in you. I hoped that I discerned a germ of romance in your low nature. I see that I am mistaken. If you will be so good as to release me, I will reimburse Mr. Jones."

When this was done, he pushed Augustus once more towards the elevator, which was now waiting for him.

"I hope there's no offense," said Augustus earnestly. "I've had a bully time, sir, and I wouldn't want the Queen to think that I wasn't grateful. But biz. is biz., you know."

Augustus heaved a reluctant sigh as the elevator descended at the thought of leaving all this grandeur. He had performed an onerous task, not without glory. He had tasted the sweets of power. He had been somebody. Now he was to be nobody again. He was going back to the theater to have his toes trodden on when he was out of step, to be sworn at, to dress up as a ruffian at an English race-track, to be pushed about by the scene-shifters. It was very hard, and he sighed again.

With the departure of Higgins, Sir Roy, too, had sighed. But with a sigh of deep satisfaction that the super was off his hands without anything serious having occurred. Let the people suspect what they might, with the purser and Higgins safely spirited away, they could prove nothing. A few judicious and ingenious

fibs, concocted between Angelica and himself, would explain the sudden disappearance of the Envoy-in-chief and of his secretary.

So Roy lighted a cigarette, and complacently strolled up the stairway to the gallery where the imprisoned reporters were angrily rattling the door and demanding that they be released.

A chorus of indignant howls greeted him.

"What's the meaning of this, Mr. Poplar?"

"It's a shabby trick."

"You can't expect any mercy from us, sir, if you treat the press in this way. What does it mean?"

Sir Roy was perfectly willing for them to expostulate with him just as much as they wanted to. That would only make Higgins's escape the more sure. So he made no reply. He simply smiled craftily and shrugged his shoulders as they demanded an interview with the Envoy and threatened all sorts of revenge. Then when the maddened reporters saw that Sir Roy evidently held the trump card, and that expostulation was useless, they became less turbulent. They awaited his explanation, frowning at him angrily.

"Gentlemen," said Sir Roy with great deliberation, "I beg you to accept my sincere apologies for the childish joke that has been perpetrated upon you, by whomsoever it was played. As you say, it was a shabby trick. But, really, gentlemen, so far as I am concerned, have you cause for complaint? I have afforded you an excellent opportunity of seeing the ceremony. As to the interview, that I must deny you. The Envoy, as you know, is seriously indisposed. His secretary is now with his chief, and expressly wishes not to be disturbed. To-morrow, perhaps——"

Sir Roy shrugged his shoulders, and inhaled his cigarette with a deep breath.

The reporters smiled skeptically.

"It sounds very much like a fish story," declared one of the "Yellows."

"But," continued Sir Roy hastily, ignoring the last remark, "the Queen has sent me to you to request that you will join us at the pleasures of the table. There is champagne, gentlemen, and Sir Walter Raleigh cigars, and——"

"Thank you, Mr. Poplar," cried the reporters in one voice.

"And I am sure you will find that the very interesting speeches that will be given there will give you quite half a column. Will you follow me to the banqueting hall, gentlemen?"

"Will we follow?" chuckled the reporters. "Well, rather."

Thus did the crafty Sir Roy cover the defeat of Higgins.

In the meanwhile Augustus had been escorted to the rear entrance of the hotel, where a cab was in waiting. If the head of Super No. 5 had not, metaphorically speaking, been giddily revolving on his shoulders in a perfect whirl of bewilderment at the splendor of the scene in which he taken part, he would have noticed that the elevator-boy, the hall-boys, the porters, the clerks, and the guests were all amazedly staring at the court breeches and the sword that he still wore. But Sir Roy had been so wildly eager to get him off, and Augustus himself had been dismissed so hurriedly and was so bewildered, that neither of

them had thought of changing the costume of Sir Roy for the dress-suit which he had worn when he first came to the hotel.

So one hand clutching the roll of bills, the other keeping the sword from between his legs, Augustus followed a giggling hall-boy to the closed cab waiting for him at the rear entrance.

"Permit me to open the door," cried one of the night clerks, who had hurried after them. "Won't you need an overcoat, sir?"

As in a dream Augustus passed the obsequious night clerk, shaking his head.

"He's dopey," sniggered the hall-boy.

"Must be going to a dress party, I suppose," remarked the night clerk to the telegraph operator. "It's the Envoy, you know, of Queen Angelica."

"Where to, sir?" asked the hall-boy with great respect, as he held open the carriage door.

Augustus awoke from his dream.

"That's it. Where to?" he thought bitterly. "Back to the theater to put on a kakhi suit, a pair of coarse cowhide boots, to carry a gun in a tournament

scene, as Super No. 5? No, no! He couldn't, he simply couldn't. He would put off returning to his plebeian surroundings as long as possible. So he answered calmly: "657 Fifth Avenue."

The hall-boy did not slam the door. He closed it gently, whistling softly to himself. 657 was the residence of the richest man in New York, one of the richest in the world.

"Drive more slowly, cabby," cried Augustus, poking his head out of the window. He wanted time to think what he would do when the cab arrived at the address he had given. He held his head, throbbing with excitement, in his hands and tried to think.

"Now, Alexander the Great," he muttered, "got bilious because he hadn't any more worlds to conquer. That's somethin' like my fix, too, only there's worlds enough for me, if I only knew where to find 'em. I feel like that fiction boy, Oliver Twist, I read of. I'm cryin' for more—not more porridge, like him, nor Castoria, like the babies, but for more honors. I've got it in the blood, and it's got to come out; it's like measles."

The carriage door opened. The cabman was standing outside in the rain, touching his hat. "Here y'are, your honor."

Augustus started violently. The house to which he had ordered the cab driven was ablaze with light. There was a long striped awning leading up to the broad steps, and a footman at the carriage door holding open an umbrella.

"Golly," groaned Augustus, in an agony of embarrassment, "what'll I do now?"

"Dress-party, your honor?" remarked the cabman, pleasantly, untangling Augustus' sword from between his legs.

Then for the first time Super No. 5 noticed that he still wore Sir Roy's court costume. Just for one wild, delirious moment, he was tempted to walk boldly up that awning, under the protection of that cringing flunkey's umbrella, to enter that wide portal of light, to mingle with the wealthiest and most exclusive set of New York. "But only to be fired out bodily," he thought bitterly. So he affected to have forgotten something, and said:

"You drive back to the hotel, cabby. I've forgot somethin'."

"I must think and hurry up, too," cried Augustus, staring up at the roof of the cab for inspiration. "Now what am I goin' to do when I get back to that hotel? Well, I've got to change these togs for one thing, that's sure. I've got to get back that dress-suit again of Isaacs. That's a dandy excuse for gettin' back. And then when I'm in Isaac's togs again, what'll I do? Be fired out, I s'pose. But if I'd the price, by gum, I'd have a private soot and a good time for once. Gee, if'd only the price."

And then he looked, fascinated, at the bills Sir Roy had paid him to give to the Super Captain. He had held them unnoticed in his hand all this while.

"Thirty-five of 'em," muttered Augustus, wavering, as he counted them. "Thirty-five! I could get a room easy for that and have a bully time, too. It's the boss's wad, but I've got as big a one at home. I could pay him back. By the great horn spoon, I'll do it. I'll raise holy jinks somehow. It's only once in your life you're a high-toned Envoy Extry-ordinary."

And so, with a wildly exultant heart, Augustus again poked his head out of the window, and shouted: "Get on there, will you? Are you goin' to be all night?"

"We're almost there, your honor."

"Front door, you bloomin' cabby. Drive up there in style, too, you—you *feller*."

"Front entrance it is, your honor," cried the cabman, jumping down from his box and opening the door.

"Gee-whiz!" chuckled Augustus, "I called him a feller, and he didn't swipe me." Then more insolently (Augustus was fast learning aristocratic manners):

"Hold up that umb'rella higher, you fool."

And Augustus passed haughtily within the hotel a second time, having first paid the cabman with two of the Super Captain's dollars.

CHAPTER X.

THE VICE-QUEEN IS INQUISITIVE.

QUEEN ANGELICA, her suite, and her guests, Sir Roy and his reporters, were making merry in the banquet hall. Sir Roy had whispered to his beloved that he had managed to get Montmorencey out of the way without exciting the suspicion of a single soul. So that Sir Roy and the Queen felt that they had ample justification for making exceeding hilariously merry.

The reporters likewise abandoned themselves to the good things of the table. The feast gave them the material of quite as good a story as an interview with the Envoy Extraordinary would have done. Even the funny paragraphers were afforded some comfort by the spirited speech of Sir Knight Hogan, who pleaded eloquently that the office of National Genealogist be created, to the end that this personage might obviate

the heart-breaking delays to which some of the Dutch Fraus had been subjected in filling up their respective ancestries.

But the Vice-Queen and the youngest of the reporters were as sulky and unhappy as an embalmed beef army contractor under the cross-fire of questions of a court-martial.

The Vice-Queen had been persistently snubbed by the Queen the whole evening. The malicious and triumphant glances of her rival had rankled deep in her bosom. These glances said as plainly as they could: "Oh, I know you suspect that something is wrong, you mean, hateful, contemptible thing. Well, there *is* something wrong. But prove it. You can't ! You never can. So there !" And all the time that the Queen's glances were speaking these envenomed words, she was pressing on the enraged Vice *paté-de-fois-gras*, and *caviare*, and ice cream, and saying in her sweetest manner, "Why, dear, where is your appetite ? You are eating nothing, love." But when one is on pins and needles with curiosity, it is natural that one's appetite suffers. And the Vice-Queen, toy-

ing with her fork, was wondering and scheming how she could have vengeance.

At last she could no longer endure the Queen's hypocritical attentions. She abruptly excused herself, murmuring that the last train for Nutley, N. J., left in half an hour. And the Queen hurled a parting shot at her by remarking in a loud, stage whisper to the lord chancellor at her right that it must be inconvenient to be a suburbanite, especially when one is doomed to pine in Jersey, far away from sweetness and light.

Young Pennington, too, was unhappy. Because, as is fitting for a cub reporter, he had followed humbly on the heels of his more illustrious brethren, only to find that every seat at the table reserved for the gentlemen of the press was already occupied. Too acutely conscious of his unworthiness to signal a waiter to bring another chair, much less to nudge the next man to move over a little, he had beaten an unnoticed and blushing retreat to the smoking-room downstairs, where he smoked many more cigarettes than were good for him. And as he smoked he wallowed in self-contempt. He knew perfectly well that

the city editor of the *Courier* would say disagreeable things because he was missing all the funny things that the other papers would have to-morrow morning, and yet he felt that he would sooner fling himself over one of the docks of the North River than go back and face the grins of the half dozen reporters. So he called himself all the bad names that he could think of. He wondered if he would make life more of a success by taking a trip to the Klondyke, or by enlisting and being drafted to the Philippines. His big brother had been one of the very best reporters of the *Courier* that a city editor had ever sworn at. He was even famous, because he had written a play, "A Cheque for Three Thousand," that had run one hundred and fifty nights at the Lyric Theater. What would he say when he heard that his kid brother had fallen down so on his very first important assignment? What would Mr. Richardson say, the assistant city editor and the bosom friend of his big brother?

And then, while he was gloomily weighing the respective merits of the Klondyke and a battlefield at Manila, he heard a waiter at his elbow say:

“ Well, that Envoy chap of the Queen’s is goin’ the pace, ain’t he, Bill ? ”

Young Pennington turned gently about in his seat, so as to face the speaker. He listened breathlessly.

“ Why, what’s he doin’ ? ” asked Bill with indifference.

“ Doin’ ! Why he’s up there in suite 123, and he’s keepin’ the indicator whirlin’ like a base-ball every three minutes, calling for high-priced grub and cigars, and cool drinks with straws. And maybe he ain’t a graft ! I’m workin’ the small-change racket on him in great shape.”

“ Why, ain’t he eatin’ with the rest of the show actor crowd of the Queen ? ”

“ No. He’s having a good time all alone.”

Pennington was very young and very green. But he had a nose long enough for news to scent out a story here. To the other reporters at the banquet Sir Roy had told that the Envoy was indisposed. But the waiter had just said that he was getting dyspepsia by eating and drinking much more than was good for him. If Pennington could only see him !

It would be a dead beat. It sounded as if the Envoy was in an agreeable state of mind. Perhaps he could be got to talk. Perhaps there would be a racy interview. Perhaps he wasn't going to fall down on his assignment after all. He wouldn't have to enlist or go to the Klondyke. He rushed upstairs to suite 123.

And as he was walking rapidly down the corridor to the room a hubbub of voices greeted his ears. And far above the hubub a husky, stentorian voice was bawling out this remarkable ditty, in a very uncertain key:

“Hoop-e-doodle-doodle-de,
Workin' hon the boulevard.”

Heavens ! Could that be the Envoy ? Pennington quickened his pace.

It was not the Envoy. It was the ex-Envoy.

It was the purser, who had spent several dollars of the money Roy had given him in intoxicating beverages, and had now come back to the hotel with a drunken man's steadfastness of purpose to cause a disturbance.

Angry voices were exhorting him to silence. But the purser would not be silenced because he was drunk.

"'Ere, 'ere, wo're you?" he was crying to the servants of the hotel, who were vainly endeavoring to pacify him. "D'ye know w'o I am? I'm a henvoy—Queen Angelica's henvoy, you son of a cea-cook."

"You are drunk and you must get out of here!" cried a clerk.

And the purser was hustled into a freight elevator and rapidly consigned to oblivion.

Pennington excitedly accosted a hall-boy.

"Look here, boy. I'm a reporter—on the *Courier*. Who was that man? Why did he say he was the Envoy?"

Some one touched his arm. Pennington turned around. He recognized the Vice-Queen.

"You are a reporter, did you say?" she asked.

"Yes," answered Pennington, eagerly. "On the *Courier*."

"Then let me talk to you. I can tell you a great many more interesting things than that hall-boy can."

"Thank you,—thank you very much," said Pennington gratefully.

"I see you've noticed it yourself that there is something strange about that Envoy."

She pointed at the door of 123.

The reporter nodded eagerly. "But the drunken fellow?"

"That's precisely the queer thing. Half a dozen people here are ready to swear that that man came in this hotel as the Envoy Extraordinary in the company of Sir Roy. He called himself the Envoy. You heard him."

"Yes, I'll catch him before they get rid of him."

Pennington raised his hand to push the button for the elevator.

"No, no!" cried the Vice-Queen, arresting his arm. "If that is the Envoy, who is the man in there?"

"The Envoy-in-chief, I suppose," said Pennington, looking longingly at the door.

"Perhaps!" The Vice-Queen lifted her eyebrows skeptically. "You are a reporter, and aren't reporters paid to find out just such things as these?"

“As these?” repeated Pennington, vaguely.

“As to why the Queen smuggled off the Envoy so soon after the ceremony; why that drunken man called himself the Envoy; why the Envoy-in-chief is reported to be indisposed, and yet is eating and drinking very indigestible things for a sick man. You are not very bright, it seems to me, if you can’t see something decidedly queer in all these things.”

“If I could only get into that room,” said Pennington, longingly.

“And is that so difficult for an enterprising reporter?” sneered the Vice-Queen. “Dear me, it’s ten o’clock and I shall miss my train! Good-night.”

“No, no,” cried Pennington. “Don’t go away, please, without giving me a hint as to how I could get into that room. You have told me so much. Tell me that, too.”

“Oh, no, I couldn’t do that. But the waiter could show you the way, I expect, if you coaxed him.”

“Waiter?” asked Pennington, puzzled.

“Is the difference so great, then, between the dress-suit of a waiter and your own? Your evening clothes

fit better, no doubt, and are of better material. But a towel on your left arm, and an obliging air would accomplish much. As for the waiter, he wouldn't object greatly to the change for a few minutes—especially if he were paid a five-dollar bill. But I mustn't stay a minute longer. I shall miss my train."

"By Jove, madame, I'm obliged to you," cried the reporter, eagerly, as the light dawned upon him. He snapped his fingers at a waiter who was just coming out of 123, to attract his attention.

"Oh, you are quite welcome. Your paper is the *Courier*, you say? I shall read it to-morrow with interest. I am sure you will find something of interest about that Envoy, if you are only resourceful and clever. You can't make your account too ridiculous."

"You are too good," said the reporter, gratefully. "And you won't tell any other reporters?"

"I know none to whom I could tell anything. Good-night."

"I think I shall be even with the Queen," said the Vice-Queen, smiling to herself in a self-satisfied manner.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ENVOY IS INDISCREET.

THE man at whom Pennington had snapped his fingers was waiting impatiently. The reporter took him aside. There was no time for diplomatic overtures. So he came right to the point at issue.

“Waiter, I suppose you wouldn’t mind earning five dollars ?”

“Not much, sir,” grinned the waiter.

“I’ll tell you how to do it,” promised the reporter.

“All right, sir. Just as soon as I’ve got some more deviled crabs for his nobs in there. It’s the Envoy, you know. He’s eatin’ and drinkin’ everything in sight.”

“Just let me take those deviled crabs into his nob’s room. Do you understand? That’s the way precisely I want you to earn the five dollars.”

“What’s he been doin’ ?” whispered the waiter.

“Are you a detective ?”

"No, no. Only a reporter. Here's my badge. I just want to interview the man, that's all. Let me go in as a waiter, and I'll give you five now, and five more to-morrow if you've kept mum and haven't given away the snap to the other reporters."

"I'll be back with the crabs in a minute," said the waiter.

Pennington waited for the man in a fever of impatience. His chance had come, if only Angelica and the rest of the reporters did not leave the table for fifteen more minutes. And he was almost certain that they wouldn't, because there was the speech-making to follow the supper. Would that waiter never come? What should he do when he did get inside?

"Here you are, sir," said the waiter, returning with the deviled crabs. "'Twon't make no dif. if you do make breaks. That guy inside won't know what's what. He may be an Envoy, but he ain't a gentleman."

Pennington seized the proffered tray with trembling hands. The waiter knocked at the door, pushed it open, and Pennington entered.

Augustus Higgins, Super No. 5, late De Vere Montmorencey, Envoy Extraordinary, was enjoying himself exceedingly. Indeed, never in his life had he enjoyed himself half so much. He had taken off the patent leathers to ease his feet. His legs were crossed, resting on the table. A large, black and expensive cigar stuck out of the corner of his mouth. A large, thin-necked bottle stood in a pail of cracked ice beside his chair. The table was covered with a chaos of empty dishes. He recrossed his legs as Pennington entered, and rebuked him lustily for being so long.

"I don't want them crabs now," said Augustus, irritably. "I want some ice-cream. Take away them dishes, feller."

"Yes, your excellency," answered the reporter, who had already come to the conclusion that this was a very extraordinary Envoy indeed.

"Oh, you needn't act like you was afraid of me, young man," said Augustus, condescendingly. "I may be an Envoy and away up in high society, but I'm a gen'leman, and I know my manners.

"And I know my place," said Pennington, cringing.

"It's been a great show, has this here function," remarked Higgins, unfastening his waistcoat buttons. "I don't s'pose you happened to see me when I was decoratin' the Queen, did you, young feller?"

"Yes, your excellency, I did have that pleasure. Nothing could have been more stupendously grand than the ceremony; but your own grandeur, your excellency, and your dignity, oh, every one in the hotel is talking of you."

"Are they, now? Here, take a cigar, young feller. Ain't they out of sight? Light up, young man, and have a pleasant, sociable smoke along with me. But lock that door first. It wouldn't do for a high-toned Envoy to be seen smoking with a low-down feller like you."

Pennington locked the door with alacrity.

"Have a glass of somethin' to drink. And tell me some more how I impress people."

"Well, your excellency——"

"Look here, young man, do they always call Envoys your excellency?"

"I have been brought up to do so, your excellency," answered Pennington humbly.

"Well, why not?" demanded Augustus. "It's a good way to bring you up. It's manners. A Envoy's a Envoy. Go ahead."

"Especially, your excellency, did you impress the reporters."

"Oh, yes. I suppose them reporters will have a good deal about me in the papers, won't they?"

"Columns," declared Pennington with emphasis. "Especially the *Courier*. If you want to see a good account of yourself, your excellency, read the *Courier*."

"Pooh, now you're showin' off, young feller. What does a low-down waiter like you know of newspapers. Tell some more about me."

"I heard the reporters say that you impressed them as a thorough man of the world. Your speech, too, made a great hit. Nobody could understand it, simply because your accent was so extremely French."

"Made in gay Paree!" chuckled Augustus. "Well, you can go on, but don't lay it on too thick."

"Then your demeanor as you sat beside Queen Angelica on the throne, your excellency!" continued

Pennington, proceeding to lay it on very thick. "It was simply superb. It was absolutely princely. Everybody said it was a most fortunate thing that the Envoy-in-chief was sick, so that you could take his place."

"Look here, we aren't talkin' of him. We are talkin' of me," remarked Augustus, who was really a little jealous of his imaginary chief.

Pennington darted a glance toward the door of the bed-room. He was burning with desire to know if the Envoy-in-chief was really in there, or was he the drunken man who had been sent down in the elevator? He determined to find out at once. So he sprang to his feet as if Augustus had spoken, and ran to the open door.

"Draught, your excellency?" he cried. "Shut the door? With pleasure."

And before the intellect of Augustus, somewhat torpid by reason of over-indulgence in the pleasures of the table, could understand what he was doing, Pennington had taken a comprehensive glance inside the bed-chamber and satisfied himself perfectly that

there was no one inside. "Then that drunken fellow must have been the Envoy-in-chief," he thought, puzzled indeed.

"Sit down," commanded Augustus crossly. "I didn't speak a word about draughts."

"I beg your excellency's most humble pardon. I thought you said that there was a draught, and I was afraid the conversation might disturb the rest of his most gracious excellency, the Envoy-in-chief."

"Eh?" questioned Augustus, staring hard.

"He is understood to be indisposed by all the reporters, your excellency."

Augustus looked unhappy. "Why did you call him his most gracious excellency?" he demanded.

"Oh, they always address Envoys-in-chief in that way," blandly replied the reporter.

For many minutes Augustus had been vainly struggling with himself to keep the secret of Queen Angelica concerning the imaginary envoy. But he was so highly exhilarated that every instant it became more difficult to hold his tongue. Then the adulation of the waiter was very sweet to him. And he was

very jealous indeed of "his most gracious excellency."

He took his stockinged feet from off the table, leaned forward towards the pseudo-waiter, tapped him confidentially on his knee, winked slowly and expressively with the left eye, and muttered hoarsely, "There ain't any Envoy-in-chief."

"No Envoy-in-chief?" cried Pennington, staring in his turn.

"You can keep somethin' on the dead quiet?" queried Augustus, suspiciously.

Pennington nodded.

"On the level?"

"On the level."

"Now, you feller, just understand this. I'm talkin' to a low-down, everyday waiter, and most folks would scorn to do it. But I seen waiters who had the feelin's of a gen'leman, just as I seen low-down, everyday supers at the theaters, gettin' three-fifty a week, and gettin' sworn at and bullied have the feelin's of a gen'leman. A gen'leman's a gen'leman, the world over, I say. Ain't that so?"

"Certainly," cried Pennington, impatiently.

"You can tell him just as soon as you seen him," continued Augustus earnestly. "Just as you do me and I do you, waiter. And what I tells you is as one gen'leman to another. Don't forget that."

"Certainly not."

"Well, then, as I said before. There ain't any Envoy-in-chief. He's a fiction hero. He ain't any more real than a ghost."

"Ah !"

"No, sir. I'm the whole bloomin' show. Just me alone. And now, hang onto your chair so you won't go fallin' out: there ain't any envoy from the land of the parlez-vous, neither."

"Ah !" cried Pennington, again.

"Nope. He's just from the Frivolity Theater, a low-down, ordinary super, Super No. 5 they call me, and his dress-suit is hired from Isaacs, and these here cuffs are the Super Captain's."

"Great guns !" cried Pennington, his eyes bulging out of his head.

"Yep," continued Augustus, enjoying the waiter's astonishment hugely. "Ain't it a circus ? The real

Envoy didn't come, so I was hired in his place, and as you said, I done my dooty just as good as the real article could."

"But that man outside just now. He swore he was the Envoy."

"That chap?" sniffed Augustus contemptuously. "I heard him myself singin'. Dead tight, the other waiter said. He was a chap that was hired before me, I guess, but he didn't suit. So they bounced him and took me in his place. Catch on?"

"No," cried Pennington. "Tell me all. Tell me everything."

Nothing loath, Augustus told the reporter all he knew.

"Now," he concluded, "you can see what a good fake envoy I am, waiter. I come back here to change these here togs. But the door was locked and the Queen's feller, he was in the banquet enjoyin' hisself. So I told my fix to the clerk, and he, thinkin' these swell rooms was mine as the Envoy, why he made one of the hotel gazaboes climb up the fire-escape and open the spring lock. That Sir Roy will be consider-

able astonished, I guess, when he finds me back again. But I've got to have Isaacs's dress-suit. Well, I s'pose I'll have to sneak back to the *Frivolity* and be a low-down super again. But it's been great, waiter, *e-mense*. Simply *e-mense*. A gorgeous function, and I've been the whole show."

Augustus blew a cloud of smoke upwards and lost himself in a review of his brief hour of glory.

Pennington had listened to the story of Super No. 5 in an ecstasy. He saw the story of the super envoy in the first column of to-morrow's *Courier*. He saw a dead beat. He saw the city editor grumbling out a reluctant approval. He saw his brother clapping him on the back. He saw future fat assignments. He saw all New York laughing at this absurd farce. It was 10:30 o'clock. There was ample time to get the story at the *Courier* office. But if any of those other reporters should get at Augustus ! A wild plan of kidnapping Augustus flashed across his mind. He hardly dare leave the talkative little super out of his sight. But he would have to take his chances. There was no time to lose, if he was going to make much of the story.

"I thought it would astonish you, waiter," said Augustus, watching the excitement of the reporter complacently. "But there is just one thing you've got to remember before you leave this here room. You promised to keep what I've told you on the dead quiet. You promised me for fair, on the dead level. I told you as one gen'leman to another. So mind you don't blab. I won't have the Queen and me give away. Mind that."

"Promised ! Promised !" stammered Pennington, edging away for the door. But Augustus Higgins had sprung to his feet and had reached the door before the astonished reporter could divine his intentions. He locked it, put the key into his pocket, and standing there with his back to the door, glared on Pennington with the ferocity of a tiger.

"Yes, promised !" he shrieked.

"You told me of your own accord."

"I didn't. Not by a jugful," cried Augustus, angrily. "Why, do you mean to say you're a low-down sneak to break your word after you promised on the dead level ? Didn't I say it was told as one gen'leman to another ?"

Pennington bit his lip perplexedly. He frowned at the enraged little man who confronted him with the savage intensity of a tigress robbed of her whelps. Pennington was very young and very green, or he would have answered Higgins long ago, soothingly and lyingly: "Certainly. That's all right, old man. It's on the quiet, of course," and then he would have left the room and rushed off to the *Courier* office as fast as a cab could take him. But because he was so young, he had foolish and romantic ideas about honor and the word of a gentleman. And young as he was, and green as he was, he saw plainly enough that no persuasions and no threats could shake Super No. 5. So he flung himself into a chair, Higgins watching him alertly.

"If I promised, I promised," he said heavily. "But I want to tell you something, too. I'm not a waiter. I'm a reporter. I pretended to be a waiter because I was given a hint that something was wrong. I wanted to find out, to make you talk, and you've told me more than I ever dreamed of."

Augustus Higgins flung the key on the table in

front of Pennington. He laid his cigar gently on the edge of the table and blinked at the reporter stupidly.

"Then there's the key," he said miserably. "It's no good tryin' to stop your talkin' if you're a noospaper man. You're sure to blab. And I've give the Queen dead away, and she was square to me. She may be a fake queen just as I'm a fake envoy and you're a fake waiter. But she'd been square to me and I wanted to be square to her, though her feller is a fresh guy. I'm a blamed idiot, sir."

His swagger, his vulgarity seemed to have been all wrung out of him. He was limp and humble and decent again; and somehow Pennington dimly was conscious that this vulgar little beast had set him an example in what was honorable and right. And it stung him to the quick that the super should take it for granted that a waiter could be a gentleman and would keep his word, but that a reporter could not.

"I've told you I shall keep my word if I gave it," he said, irritably.

"Well, you did ! On the dead level, you did, sir."

"Then I keep it."

"What !" cried Augustus, overjoyed. "You ain't goin' to write me up as a fake envoy ? On the dead level ? You ain't goin' to give the Queen away ?"

"No," snarled Pennington, shaking his head. "But it's a shame. The finest story that I shall run to earth for many a long day !"

Augustus was delirious with joy. He recognized the note of sincerity in Pennington's promise. He held out his hand eagerly.

"Shake, sir," he cried, wringing Pennington's limp hand. "Shake ! You're a daisy. You—you are a *gen'leman*, by gum, you are. You're a reporter and you wont give the Queen away ? Well, well ! You're all right, all right !"

"Don't be an ass !" said Pennington, savagely. "Let go my hand, will you ? I'm glad you recognize the sacrifice I'm making. That story would have made me. It's the infernal luck of course that I should have promised. Gad, I can never hold up my head on Park Row again. I can never look the city editor in the eye."

Augustus bit his nails nervously. He wished he

could show him how much he admired him. But he didn't know what to say, and he was silent.

"But look here," cried Pennington, lifting his head from between his hands, "if I've given you my word, I didn't give it to the Queen."

"Eh, sir?" cried Augustus, anxiously. "I don't know as I quite catch on."

Pennington knew that he was going to say a contemptible thing. He knew that Super No. 5 would refuse and despise him for saying it. But he felt, too, that he owed some loyalty to the *Courier*. He simply could not abandon the chances of getting Augustus to give him back his word of honor, however remote those chances were of success.

"What I mean is, Mr. Higgins," he said slowly, looking at Super No. 5 askance, "that if you will give me permission to use what you have told me I'll give you a hundred dollars."

Augustus shook his head.

"I didn't think you'd have offered me money, sir," he said in a hurt tone. "I'm not that sort."

"I will see that you get two hundred dollars," persisted Pennington, though the effort cost him much.

"Don't !" cried Augustus. "I shall be fightin' you in a minute, sir."

Pennington gave a sigh of relief that *that* was over. But he looked at Super No. 5 dejectedly.

"You had better be goin'," said Augustus, carefully keeping his eyes turned away from the reporter. "The Queen'll be here maybe, or Sir Roy. They mustn't find me talkin' to you."

But Pennington did not go. A great idea had flashed across his mind. He seized Super No. 5 by the collar. He shook him until he almost choked. He swayed him to and fro in his excitement.

"Listen, Higgins, listen. I've given you my word. I shall keep it. You needn't worry about that. But I've flung away the grandest chance of a scoop that ever came in the narrow path of cub reporter. I expect you to be duly grateful, Higgins. If I don't betray the Queen's secret as to the identity of her Envoy, you aren't to disappear to-night; you are to continue to be her Envoy to-morrow, the next day, a week, perhaps."

"I don't catch on," gasped Higgins.

"I say, you mustn't stop being the Envoy now—to-night. I want you to be Envoy right along until I can't get any more stories out of you for the *Courier*."

"It'd be too risky, sir. An there's the Envoy-in-chief. Who'd be him, and what's the object?"

"I would be him when it is necessary. And the object? Why, De Vere Montmorencey, you are dense. I will plan adventures for you, the Queen's Envoy Extraordinary, that shall astonish the town, and I shall be the only reporter who will have any account of them in the whole borough of Manhattan. I'll write 'em up in advance, and the *Courier* shall have the exclusive news."

"But the Queen herself?" gasped Higgins, appalled at the magnitude of the plan.

"Do you suppose she'll object? She'll shine in the reflected glory of her Envoy. It'll advertise her to beat the band. The marvelous doing of her precious Envoys will put quite in the shade this ceremony to-night. They shall be a seven days' wonder."

"You're too young to play the Envoy-in-chief," objected Higgins, jealously,

"A white wig will be all I shall want, and a little grease paint, because I'm supposed to be sick in bed. If any people want to call on me, they'll see me cuddled up on the couch in a darkened room."

"And I'll make you up," cried Higgins, jubilantly.

"You can be the whole show, Higgy. I shall be busy hustling round planning adventures and getting the news to the *Courier* office."

"E-mense, simply e-mense!" murmured Higgins. "But how'll you bring the Queen round?"

"Just as I told you," cried Pennington, impatiently. "Besides, she'll have to consent, because, though I've told you I will not give her away, I haven't said I won't tell her that I know she has a fake Envoy, Higgins."

"It's blackmail," whispered Augustus.

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Pennington, calmly. "And now, Higgins, there's no time to spare. I must be writing my special interview with you, the Envoy-in-chief. Then I'll write up an interview I've supposed to have had with you, the Deputy Envoy. And when these two interviews are sent off to the *Courier*,

we'll put our two heads together and plan out some nice things to do to-morrow that'll sound well in print."

"*E-mense*, sir !" cried Augustus, "simply *e-mense*! What a head-piece you've got, sir !"

"Thank you, Higgins. But don't talk, please. I'm writing the interview with the Envoy-in-chief."

CHAPTER XII.

THE KNIGHTING OF HIGGINS.

THE interviews when written made two columns and a half. The interview with the Deputy Envoy was full of picturesque details, personal, anecdotal, and racy. Just such a story as the city editor liked, bearing the stamp of truth, so Pennington flattered himself.

De Vere Montmorencey's views were commented upon at length—his first impressions of America, his ideas of the Dreyfus scandal, whom he considered to be the greatest actress in America, his enthusiastic comments on the American soldier as a fighting machine, his burning desire to see that great and good man, President McKinley, and the stockyards in Chicago, and Niagara Falls. His tastes were touched upon, his dress, his truly astonishing grasp of the English idiom.

Although the Envoy-in-chief was ill in bed, he had welcomed the *Courier* representative. At the urgent request of the *Courier* he had consented to sign a dictated statement. As a descendant himself of a Bourbon prince, he expressed his extreme satisfaction at the remarkable tendency of the people of the United States towards monarchical ideas. He expressed the firm belief that the societies of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Colonial Dames, the Loyal Legion, and the Knight Templars would hasten to join the standard so gallantly unfurled by the Dutch Fraus, and would enroll themselves as subjects of Queen Angelica. Thus a revolution of a sweeping character would be accomplished without bloodshed.

“Yes,” said Pennington, with pride, “I think I may say that those two interviews will cause a sensation, Higgins. They are corkers. And now will you please press that indicator for a messenger boy? Thank you.”

With his copy Pennington sent a personal note to the city editor, informing him that by an unparalleled piece of good fortune he happened to have attracted

the favor of M. Montmorencey, who had urged upon him his hospitality. This invitation Pennington had accepted because he could foresee many good, exclusive stories for his paper. He asked that the editor would send one hundred dollars for incidental expenses.

"You see, Higgins, we shall keep up the game just as long as I have ingenuity enough to plan out original undertakings, and you have pluck enough to carry them out successfully. I imagine the bubble will burst in a day or two. But I think I can safely promise you an exciting day to-morrow."

The knob of the door leading out into the corridor was rattled. Then two astonished voices were heard without.

"It's the Queen and Sir Roy," whispered Higgins. "I'll bet they give us fits."

"Unlock the door, and don't be foolish," commanded Pennington, coolly. Half an hour ago he would have been almost as frightened as was Super No. 5. But now he had crossed the Rubicon. He did not intend to let anything frighten him.

Tremulously Augustus unlocked the door. Then he stood cowering behind it in his stockings.

"You might as well lock it again, Higgins," said Pennington, when Sir Roy and the Queen, too astonished to speak, had stepped inside the room. "There may be reporters outside."

"You see, ma'am, I—I've come back," volunteered Augustus at length, trying hard to smile.

"Come back, you insolent puppy!" thundered Sir Roy. "What do you mean by this confounded intrusion?"

He swept Augustus Higgins' shoes off the chair. He looked at the forest of bottles and the chaos of empty dishes on the table. Then he swept a withering glance at Pennington, who bowed low.

"I wouldn't lose your temper, if I were you," he said soothingly. "It can't do any good, you know, and it's said to be the worst thing possible from the standpoint of the physician. We can explain it all."

"*We!*" echoed Sir Roy. "Will you have the goodness to tell me who *you* are?"

"With pleasure, sir. Just the youngest and most unworthy of the reporters of the *Courier* staff."

"A reporter!" shrieked the Queen.

"That's all, madame. Not much, I confess."

There was a silence to be felt. It was broken by Augustus, who remarked in a faint voice that it was a warm evening. This not having any appreciable effect on the strained relations between the two couples, Augustus petitioned, "Will you excuse me ma'am, if I put on my shoes?" Then he retreated to an obscure corner of the room, trembling at the outcome.

"Has he told you—I mean, have you asked him about——"

The Queen did not finish her sentence. It was not necessary. She nodded her head contemptuously towards Augustus Higgins, who was entirely occupied in lacing up his shoes.

"Yes. He had spoken with me," replied Pennington, significantly.

The loyal Sir Roy was locking and unlocking his fingers, his eyes imploring permission from his beloved to fling the reporter out of the window. But the Queen had sank back in her chair with the one remark to Sir Roy: "That man has betrayed us."

She was quite crestfallen and hopeless. Her chin rested in her hand. She looked at Pennington steadfastly, as if trying to fathom his purpose. She wasn't a real queen, of course, only a queen pretender; and Pennington supposed he ought to be amused that she took the matter so seriously. But she was a woman. He felt sorry for her. And although he was determined not to relinquish the opportunity of making Higgins play the piper, and would sacrifice the Queen in so far as she interfered with his plans, he was sorry for her, and his eyes sought the carpet.

"You are a reporter," murmured the Queen, sighing heavily. "It is useless to ask you to have mercy. Very likely, sir, your work is accomplished already."

At these words Augustus looked up from his shoe-lacing alertly. He resembled nothing so much as a little noisy fox-terrier, whose devotion is divided between master and mistress. He glanced anxiously from the sad face of the Queen to the uneasy reporter. Then he hobbled up to them eagerly, one shoe in his hand, the other on his foot:

"Oh, I assure you, ma'am," he cried, gesticulating

excitedly with the shoe in his hand, "you are quite off your base, ma'am. I was foolish enough, ma'am to tell this reporter here. I thought him a low-down waiter, ma'am, not dreamin' he was a noospaper man. But I do assure you, ma'am, that we both have the feelin's of high-toned gen'lemen. He's told me on the dead level, ma'am, that he ain't goin' to give you away to the papers, nor me, neither."

"Is this true?" asked the Queen, incredulously.

Pennington bowed. "Perhaps you had better explain, Higgins," he said, smiling encouragement to Super No. 5.

Super No. 5 did explain, not grammatically, perhaps, but eloquently none the less, his face all aglow with enthusiasm.

"By gad, sir," cried Sir Roy to Pennington, when Augustus had finished his narrative, "you are a good fellow and a gentleman, as that fellow says. Will you shake hands with me?"

"That is the gentleman you should shake hands with, sir," said Pennington, dryly, still smiling at Higgins, whose face glowed with delight now that

peace was about to be restored. "And, madame," he was looking at the Queen, "I venture to say that you have few adherents so loyal among your subjects."

"It is true," said the Queen, rising from her chair. "De Vere Montmorencey, kneel before me. Give me your sword."

The little super crouched down on the carpet, wonderingly, cocking an inquisitive but adoring eye upwards at Queen Angelica.

"De Vere Montmorencey," said the Queen, "were I queen indeed, I would make you a knight indeed, just as now, only queen in play, I make you knight in play. De Vere Montmorencey, Envoy Extraordinary of Prince Geoffrey de la Fleur, I, Angelica, of the Dutch Fraus, make you knight. Arise Sir Knight Montmorencey, and wear this ring always for my sake."

Super No. 5 had listened with his mouth wide open. Something had stirred within him; there was a radiance on his face; there were tears in his little red-rimmed, bleary eyes, a certain dignity in his carriage,

as he took the ring that the Queen extended smilingly towards him.

“You may kiss my hand,” said the Queen graciously.

And kiss it Augustus did. Reverently, no doubt, but, it must be confessed, with a loud smack that bespoke rather great heartiness and good-will than elegance.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REPORTER DOES STUNTS.

"You are a reporter," said the Queen, turning to Pennington, rather shamefacedly, when Super No. 5 had risen from his knees. "It is inevitable that your spirit is not turned towards the ideal. I cannot complain if you smile at this ceremony as foolish and childish."

"Not at all, madame," replied Pennington, politely, if somewhat vaguely. "In the meanwhile, Mr. Higgins——"

"M. Montmorency," interrupted the Queen, firmly. "Please try to remember this. I have not knighted Mr. Higgins, but M. Montmorency, Envoy Extraordinary."

"Very good, madame," acquiesced Pennington, winking facetiously at the gentleman in question, who glared back in stony, dignified reproof. "Monsieur

Montmorencey has told you of our compact. I have agreed to keep secret the identity of your Envoy Extraordinary. On the other hand, I ask you, not as my right, but as a favor in return, not to permit M. Montmorencey to sink into oblivion—for a few days, at least. Not until I have planned a few startling adventures for him. He shall do nothing clownish to bring your name and royal rank in discredit. But I must ask your consent for this, and perhaps, your assistance.”

“I am weary of playing a part,” said the Queen, passing her hand across her brow. “It presses too heavily upon me.”

“Yes, ma’am, I noticed that the crown’s too tight,” volunteered the literal Augustus, respectfully. “You can see the red mark of the rim on your forehead now, ma’am. It sets too snug, and your bangs ain’t exactly foot-ball hair, ma’am.”

“Then it’s too risky, Mr. Pennington,” added Sir Roy, who had been smoking in silence.

“Not at all,” answered Pennington, warmly. “I shall avoid any risks. And frankly, madame, what-

ever you may decide, I shall hold Mr. Higgins, I mean Montmorencey, strictly to his promise, just as he held me strictly to mine."

"I was a chump for promising," said Augustus, remorsefully, casting a look of undying devotion to the Queen. "I ought to be kicked, ma'am."

"Nevertheless, your word is your bond, M. Montmorencey. As one of my subjects you could not tell a lie. Then we will play the game to the finish, sir," she added, turning to the reporter.

It was no affair of Pennington's to inquire how the Queen reconciled her own white fibs and petty deceits with her high ideals of conduct for Sir Knight Higgins. His affair was to get good stories for his newspaper, so he bowed delightedly and said:

"I admire your pluck, madame. And you may rely on the devotion of M. Montmorencey and myself, I am sure."

"Have you any plans?" asked Sir Roy, rather crossly. "Because I am getting sleepy."

"Several," replied Pennington, promptly. "It has occurred to me that Hig—Montmorencey might be

of an eccentric disposition. He might be extravagant in his dress. That always attracts attention. He might wear a monocle and trousers of a pronounced check, very wide at the hips and very narrow at the feet, and a frock coat of bottled green with a red velvet collar——”

“Never !” said the Queen, peremptorily. “I will not consent to having my Envoy made ridiculous.”

“Thank you kindly, ma’am,” said Augustus, much relieved.

“Then how would this do, Higgins, to hunt out that purser fellow——”

“Look here,” interrupted Augustus, annoyed, “the Queen’s asked you to be polite and decent. If you’d just as soon, call me Monsoor Montmorencey. It don’t make much dif. to me what I’m called, but if she says I’m Monsoor Montmorencey, I’ve got to be Monsoor Montmorencey, and I wish you’d remember it, sir.”

“All right, old chap,” cried Pennington. “As I said, you might hunt out the purser, and have a nice little mill with him——”

"A nice little mill!" echoed the puzzled Queen.

"You might get knocked down by him, say," continued the reporter, with enthusiasm. "We could manage it so that no other reporters were present. 'The Envoy of Queen Angelica is insulted grossly and brutally assaulted.' That would read very well, I think. And I could make something racy out of it. How does that strike you, Hig—Montmorencey?"

"I don't know exactly," replied Augustus, scratching his ear. "But I'll get knocked down if the Queen says the word," he added, cheerfully.

Sir Roy pooh-poohed the scheme contemptuously.

"If you haven't any more brilliant ideas than those worn-out, cheap expedients for notoriety," sneered Sir Roy, "we may as well go to bed."

"Yes, they are pretty stale," admitted Pennington, ruefully. "I must have a night to think things over. I may have to ask the city editor for some suggestions. But I'd sooner not, because that would take away half the fun."

"And I wish you'd try to remember, sir, that though I'm ready to do as much as the next man for

the Queen, I'd sooner not have my head knocked off if there's any other way."

Another kind of knock, peremptory, loud, aggressive, not at Augustus Higgins' head, but at the door, startled them into silence. And when it did not cease, but became even more loudly aggressive, Sir Roy moved toward the door to answer it.

"Just a minute," cried Pennington. "There are just three kinds of people in the world who knock like that. The sheriff, the rent-collector, and the reporter. Now, it can't be the rent-collector——"

"And certainly not the sheriff," cried the Queen.

"Then it must be the reporter. Very likely it's one from the *Courier* office. Perhaps to take my place. But that's impossible. In the first place, because we should not dare to tell any reporter, even one from the *Courier*, the secret of Montmorencey's identity. In the second place, because I'm not willing to be supplanted. You see I'm only a cub, and they don't think much of me at the *Courier*. Then, to be on the safe side, supposing that Hig—Montmorencey and myself retreat into the bed-room. I needn't say, of

course, that I am not here. But if he asks for me, you might pretend to consult with the Queen so as to give me the tip, sir. Come along, Montey."

Pennington and the Envoy retreated into the bedroom. The Queen assumed a gracefully negligé attitude. She picked up a plush-covered volume containing her pedigree and thoughtfully perused it. Sir Roy placed his right foot a few inches from the door, and looking through the crack, demanded who was there and what was wanted.

"I want to see Mr. Pennington," answered a voice.

"Mr. Pennington?" asked Sir Roy, "who is that, please?"

"You know very well, sir," continued the voice. "And I must see him. It's absolutely imperative."

"But I have told you, sir, he is not here," protested Sir Roy, resisting the pressure exerted upon the door by the person without.

Disregarding the protest of Sir Roy, the voice continued doggedly, "It is useless to deny that he is here, sir. I know it. And I warn you I shall not permit

this door to be closed until I see him. If you tell him that his brother is without, and that he has been sent from the *Courier* office on purpose to see him, he will see me, I am sure."

Pennington listened to the voice, half amusedly, half angrily. It was his big brother, a special writer on the *Courier*, who covered only affairs of great promise. Of course he had come to take the younger man's place. Pennington could not yield it. But he knew his brother's stubbornness. It would be quite impossible to keep him outside. So Pennington, Jr., looked about the room for a chance to hide. He could see no place that would afford protection.

"I guess the jig's up, sir," whispered Higgins, anxiously. "If that feller makes his way in, he'll get onto things, sure."

"Oh, no, he won't, at least not more than I choose to let him see, Higgins. Oblige me with that wig you were wearing during the ceremony, will you? Thanks. A superb fit, by Jove! Now turn out the electric lights, Montey, all but that one at the far end of the chamber. Now, Augustus, watch me. I am no

longer the cub reporter. I am, for a few minutes, your chief, the Envoy Extraordinary himself."

Pennington flung himself on a couch and pulled a rug up to his chin and grinned.

"Call the Queen, Montey !"

The Queen was duly astonished, and not a little delighted, to see a white-haired old man on the couch, his eyes just blinking above the sheets.

"Let him come in," whispered Pennington. "Let him even see me, if he insists, as no doubt he will. He will see only the Envoy Extraordinary, attended by his faithful secretary, M. Montmorencey. And Montey, old chap, don't talk. Be solicitous for my welfare, the devoted aide. Sit down there at my side. Pour out a glass of water. Hand it to me when that fellow outside comes in. All ready, madame."

The delighted Queen had no opportunity of acquainting Sir Roy with the stratagem Pennington had planned. She could only poke him significantly in the ribs, and shake her head assuringly at him. Then she reseated herself with her plush-covered pedigree, and cried in a languid voice :

"Let the gentleman in, Roy, if he so rudely insists."

Sir Roy knew from the winks and expressive pokes of the Queen that there was no danger of Pennington, Jr., being discovered. So he threw open the door. Pennington, Sr., stepped promptly inside, bowed deferentially to the Queen, and brazenly remarked that he feared that he was intruding.

"You, sir, ought to be the best judge of that," replied Sir Roy, frowning at the unwelcome guest. "What right have you at this late hour to disturb us?"

"Madame," replied Pennington, Sr., ignoring Sir Roy, "I must see Mr. Pennington. It is imperative."

"*Qu'est que c'est que ça, Montmorencey?*" croaked a rasping, irritable voice from the bed-chamber. "*Nom de diable! Qui est là? Qui vient ici à cette heure? Sacré bleu!*"

"Hush," whispered the Queen, greatly agitated. "You see, you are disturbing the fitful slumbers of the Envoy. I beg you to be silent."

"The Envoy?" repeated Pennington, Sr.

"Seriously indisposed, I fear. He suffered agonies during his voyage. *Mal de mer*, poor man! You are no doubt aware that he could not himself be present at the ceremony this evening. It will be a life-long grief to me. And now, pray begone before you excite his anger!"

"But Mr. Pennington?" insisted the obstinate reporter.

The Queen shrugged her shoulders, and pulled aside with a dramatic flourish the portières that separated the two rooms.

"Sir, if you insist," she cried haughtily.

"Thank you. If I may be so bold as to have a glimpse of the Envoy," cried Pennington, Sr. "Just to describe him in the *Courier*."

He glanced in the bed-room.

"*Hein? Qui le diable êtes-vous?*" croaked the rasping old voice from the couch.

"Hush!" hissed Augustus indignantly to the intruder.

"*Pardon, excellence,*" muttered Pennington, Sr.,

puzzling his brain as to where he had seen eyes like those glaring at him from the pillow, and where he had heard that American French before. And while he was staring at the Envoy perplexedly, the two fiery eyes winked at him—very, very slowly, and very, very expressively—once, twice, thrice.

“*Pardon, excellence,*” muttered Pennington, Sr., again, retreating from the bed-room in great confusion.

And the rasping voice cried again, “*Nom de diable. Sacré ! Cochon. Allez-vous-en.*”

“*Magnifique!*” whispered back Pennington, as he cast a last glance at the bed.

“Well, you are satisfied?” demanded the Queen.

“Perfectly, madame,” replied Pennington, Sr. “And pardon me if I insisted too rudely. But I wished to see Mr. Pennington very much.”

“And now that you have seen the Envoy Extraordinary?”

“I shall depart, madame, perfectly satisfied.”

“But you have not yet seen Mr. Pennington,” said the Queen.

"I can see my brother any day. It is not often one may see an Envoy Extraordinary in his pajamas. And madame," cried Pennington, Sr., raising his voice so that his brother could hear, "should Mr. Pennington return to his friend M. Montmorencey, would you be so good as give him this letter?"

"We, we, monsoor!" exclaimed Augustus, poking his head outside the portières.

"Well," cried Pennington in great spirits, flinging the rug to the floor, after his brother's departure, "did I act the part of the Envoy well, or did I not, Montey?"

"Out of sight, sir," replied Augustus. "And did you catch on to my French?"

"It was superb, Montmorencey. And now the letter, madame."

And as he read the letter the Queen handed to him, a deep joyous light came into the reporter's eyes. He turned to her rapturously:

"It's from the city editor. Tips for me in case my brother could not see me."

"I hope they are better than those you were suggesting just now," remarked Sir Roy, sleepily.

"Guess who's at the Holland House!" demanded Pennington of the Queen.

"Not the Queen of the Van Winkle Dames?" asked the Queen in suspense.

"His Excellency, Karaja Pasha, Minister of the Turkish Empire to these United States. He has just landed, *en route* to Washington."

"How does that concern us?" asked the Queen, eagerly.

"How does it concern us, madame?" echoed Pennington. "Montey, can you guess?"

"You bet I can, sir. I'll bet a week's pay that that there Turk is goin' to receive a visit from you and me—one envoy to another in a friendly little sociable call," cried Augustus.

"Better even than that. The *Courier* will fix things so that he will make a call on us here, and then on you, madame. The *Courier* will have boomed your rank so that he will be falling all over himself to pay his salaams to a Queen."

"Why should the *Courier* do anything like that?" asked the Queen.

"Madame, you forget that one of its reporters has an exclusive tip on all the doings of the two Extraordinary Envoys."

"Well, that's something like an idea," said Sir Roy cordially. "Take all the plums you can get, Angel, dear, and never mind on whose tree they grow."

"It will be very nice indeed," acquiesced the delighted Queen. "You have done us a great service, sir."

"You are quite welcome," replied Pennington.

"And," continued the Queen, somewhat timidly, "if it would afford you any satisfaction, I should like to make you a knight, too."

"Like you did me, ma'am?" asked Augustus, hopping about the floor in an ecstasy. "That would be bully. Say yes, sir," he implored of the reporter. "It would be out of sight for us both to be knights."

"Thank you, indeed," answered Pennington with profound respect. "You are too good, madame. But I fear my soul is too hopelessly democratic to appreciate the compliment as I should."

"Very well," said the Queen, disappointedly. "Good-night,"

“You had better come into this room by the adjoining suite in the morning,” cautioned Pennington. “It will be safer. Hope we shall have an interesting day to-morrow. Good-night.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TURKISH MINISTER SALAAMS.

AUGUSTUS HIGGINS had tried to persuade Pennington to occupy the big brass bedstead.

"No, no, Montmorencey," insisted Pennington. "You take precedence of me both as a knight and as being less of a fake envoy. I'll bunk on the sofa here."

"We'll toss up for it, sir," compromised Augustus. The lot had fallen to him.

Never in his life had Super No. 5 reposed so luxuriously. But never in his life had he been less inclined to sleep. It was simply absurd for him to attempt it. Was it only a few hours ago that he had been lifted from the squalor of the *Frivolity* stage to be Envoy Extraordinary in the Rotterdam. It seemed weeks. So much that was glorious had happened. And with what delicious uncertainty was the morrow fraught?

He kept pinching himself to be sure that it was not all a dream, and that he would not awake presently to find himself in his cell-like room in the Mills House.

Pennington had slept soundly enough. He was awakened by Higgins showering an armful of newspapers on him.

"I guess Sir Roy ordered 'em, sir. I knew you'd want to see 'em just as soon as I would."

For half an hour Pennington did not speak a word. In his trousers and shirt-sleeves he buried himself behind columns and columns of print. It would be a nice point to decide who gloated over the details the more. It is true Higgins had played the more important rôle. But Pennington had been the power behind the throne. He had pulled the wires.

And then the story itself. The *Courier* was the only paper that made anything out of her Envoy Extraordinary. The other papers had tried hard, but they had had no chance. Pennington fell on the neck of Higgins and hugged him.

"What a beat, Montey ! What a scrumptious, dizzy, gorgeous beat ! Higgins, I am going crazy !"

“Not till you’ve pulled off that interview with the Turk, sir, I hope. Say, that in the paper where she made me a knight was out of sight. Yes, sir, I must say you’ve done me and the Queen and yourself proud. But I wish you wouldn’t call me Montey, sir. It’s come down from Montmorencey, and most as bad as Higgins, which I now shudder at. And to think that I once thought it a good, respectable name. It just proves how high I’ve riz since then, don’t it ?”

“A loaf of bread is no comparison. And now, old chap, we’ll breakfast.”

“There’s only one thing that kinder rattles me when I think of it,” said Augustus, when he had breakfasted sumptuously, “and that’s those togs of Isaacs that the Super Captain hired.”

“You mean they ought to go back ?” queried Pennington, easily.

Augustus nodded.

“I said as they’d go back early this mornin’, sure.”

“Yes ; but you couldn’t send back the clothes without some of the reporters, who are standing outside that door waiting to see you, following the package

up, perhaps. You'll have to risk a little row with the Jew if you are going to stand by the Queen."

"All right, sir," acquiesced Augustus, cheerfully. "I'll stand by her in fair weather and foul."

Pennington received two letters by the morning's mail—one of them from his brother, the Great Pennington. the other from the city editor.

"*My dear boy:*

"You've seen the morning's papers before this, of course, and know how you've scored a beat and covered yourself with glory on Park Row. Last night they telegraphed me at New Rochelle, after they got your note, and I was to cover the Envoy. And when I found that my kid brother had forestalled me, I wasn't pleased, I confess. Of course I was duly astonished to find an Envoy instead of you—an *Envoy who winked*. That was great. I shall shake hands with you on that. I don't deny that I'm quite at sea as to how you accomplished what you did. But I needn't warn you that it's a very risky matter, this faking. Take no chances. I've fixed things up with

the city editor and told him all he need know. I enclose a note from him that will interest you. Good luck, old chap.

“Yours,

“NORMAN BRIDGEWORTH PENNINGTON.”

“*Dear Mr. Pennington:*

“The minister from Turkey will call on the Envoy Extraordinary this morning. He should also be induced to call on the Queen. Get a good story—2 columns. If there’s any danger of it getting out, have your copy in by two for the *Evening Courier*. I shall suggest some nice little sensation for to-morrow. But the Turkish Minister is enough for to-day. If the truth of this whole affair gets out and the *Courier* gets mixed up in it, I wouldn’t trouble to come around for your pay if I were you.

“Sincerely,

“H. B. CAVERLEY.”

“Montey,” said Pennington, soberly, as he tore both letters into little pieces, and tossed them into the waste-basket, “it’s a risky game we’re playing.

High stakes, but deuced risky. But we'll go ahead, old man ?”

“ Sure, sir.”

“ And under no circumstances will we give away the—Queen ?” He was about to say *Courier*, but he thought he had better substitute Queen.

“ No, sir. And I think that's her knockin' at the door what separates the two soots, sir.”

It was Sir Roy and Queen Angelica.

“ I have a key here,” whispered Sir Roy. “ Can we come in ?”

“ You bet,” whispered back Augustus.

“ We couldn't come in by the other door, because there are so many people waiting without. They were reporters,” remarked Sir Roy, as they entered.

“ It was a splendid account you wrote,” cried the Queen with enthusiasm. “ Not one has dreamed of Montmorencey's identity. How shall I thank you both ?”

“ And here is the letter from the Minister from Turkey, I think.” Sir Roy handed a large official envelope to Pennington.

"Here you are, Montey," said Pennington, handing it in his turn to Augustus.

"Certainly, it is for you," beamed the Queen. "The message is for the Envoy Extraordinary. Open it, Sir Knight Montmorencey."

"Oh, no, ma'am," gasped Higgins. "I reeley couldn't. I'd sooner you'd take it, please, ma'am."

"Nonsense," said the Queen, tapping him fondly on the cheek.

Augustus merely unfastened the envelope, and handed the enclosure to the Queen.

"Yes, it's very nice, very gratifying," remarked Queen Angelica, a delicate flush of joy mantling her cheek. "His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan of Turkey, in the person of his trusted servant, the Minister to the United States, will make a call upon you, M. Montmorencey, this morning. Do you think it will be quite safe?"

The Queen turned anxiously to Pennington.

"Perfectly, madame," replied the reporter confidently. "The *Courier* has arranged all that. And after he has paid a fraternal diplomatic call on Mont-

morencey and me, I shall arrange an interview for yourself with him."

"You and me?" asked Augustus.

"Yes. I couldn't trust you alone, Montey. It would be safer for me to be present. Besides, he might not be satisfied with a mere secretary. A wig and a little paint will fix me up nicely."

"And then?" queried the Queen.

"It will depend, madame, upon what the editor of the *Courier* suggests. If he suggests nothing, I think then will be the time for disappearing, as the reporters said last night."

"For good, sir?"

Augustus Higgins was slightly disappointed.

"No, from New York. To Washington, perhaps. I think that if the city editor of the *Courier* does not present too strenuous objections, it would be a good thing to go off on a little tour. We would begin with Washington. How would you like to make a call on the President of the United States, Montey?"

CHAPTER XV.

WHERE'S THE DRESS-SUIT OF ISAACS ?

THE Minister from Turkey had salaamed thirty-two times to Queen Angelica, and had taken an obsequious departure from suite 123.

"Well, that was *e-mense*, simply *e-mense*, wasn't it, ma'am ?" queried Augustus.

"If the Vice-Queen could have been present, it would have been perfect," agreed the Queen.

"Yes, 'twas too bad you couldn't give her the merry ha-ha, ma'am."

"Because she was not present," sighed the Queen regretfully, "I cannot deny that my satisfaction is less. No one to envy you ! It was too quiet to suit my taste."

Pennington, scribbling furiously on a pad at a side table, looked up, annoyed.

"I have told you repeatedly, madame, it wouldn't

have been safe to have had an audience. Don't you know that reporters are dogging our footsteps? that we couldn't leave this room now without twenty of them rushing at us?"

"Well," said the Queen, a little sulkily, "I can't see any fun in having ambassadors call on you if no one sees them do it."

"People will know it, madame," replied Pennington, coolly, "when they read their papers to-morrow."

"There's no use talkin', ma'am," remarked Higgins, pacifically, "that he's exalted us to a giddy height. If we was to fall! I feel like old Nap. in the picture up at the Metropolitan Museum, where he's standin' all serene and haughty with his generals, lookin' at his soldiers chargin' in the battle. But, gee-whiz, how the old boy did take a tumble! If we was to, too!"

"We are not going to fall," said Pennington, grimly. "We are going to climb even higher. If I can't pull off that meeting between you and McKinley, I shall feel I have lived in vain."

Sir Roy entered hurriedly from the room of

the adjoining suite. Pennington confronted him anxiously.

"Nothing up, I hope?"

"Nothing much," answered Sir Roy, with apparent unconcern. "But I want to speak with you a minute."

The Queen, Sir Roy, and the reporter went into the adjoining apartment, leaving Snper No. 5 alone.

"It's the Super Captain," said Sir Roy, breathlessly. "He's come to see about Higgins—about the money and the dress-suit."

"You didn't say he was in here?" asked Pennington.

"No. I said I had the impression that no such man had been here, but I would consult with the Queen."

"What are we going to do?" beseeched the Queen. "The Super Captain knows that we have had no Envoy Extraordinary. And he will tell others."

"You mean, madame," said the reporter slowly, "that he only suspects that. He *knows* nothing of

the sort. It is true that he may be so foolish as to tell people that he sent a man to play the part of the Envoy Extraordinary. But if he did that, he would never rent out any more supers to you. He would be betraying professional secrets."

"Then why not tell him that Higgins is inside and has been playing the Envoy?" asked Sir Roy.

"Because we should be admitting everything. We admit nothing. Higgins won't betray us."

He pushed open the door and entered the room, where Higgins stood awaiting them, not without wonder and anxiety.

"Montey, old chap," said Pennington, placing his hand on the super's shoulder, "the Super Captain's outside. He wants his dress-suit and the money you were paid last night."

Augustus whistled softly.

"Now, Montey, we can give you the money and you can take out the dress-suit to him. Then everything will be all right so far as you are concerned."

Sir Roy and Queen Angelica watched Augustus Higgins, Super No. 5, anxiously. He kept his eyes fixed steadily on Pennington's face.

"But," continued Pennington, "if you did that, he would know for certain what now he could never prove. All he could prove now is that he sent a man to play the Envoy. Do you understand?"

"Well, I'm not catchin' on too quick," replied Augustus, anxiously.

"He would tell everybody; perhaps the Vice-Queen, my greatest enemy," interrupted the Queen, eagerly. "Oh, Montmorencey, you wouldn't have him do that. You wouldn't betray me?"

"No, ma'am; I stand by you every time."

The reporter slapped him on the back.

"Good boy! I knew you wouldn't make the *Courier* the laughing stock of Park Row, Montey."

"I don't give a hoop for the *Courier*," said Augustus, contemptuously. "It's the Queen here I'm lookin' after."

"It is the same thing," remarked Pennington, coolly. "Then, Sir Roy, I think it would be well to say something like this to the Super Captain: That Queen Angelica did not need the services of the man he sent because the Envoy himself arrived after all;

that on dismissing him you paid the man the money he demanded; that very likely he has spent that money on drink."

The Queen looked at Higgins hesitatingly.

"Oh, that would mean arrest for M. Montmorency when he was found," she cried. "I could never allow that. Let the Super Captain at least be paid the money that Montmorency spent last night for cigars and things."

"No, ma'am, not by a jugful!" declared Higgins emphatically. "If you pay the boss, he'll think you're tryin' to hush him up, and you'd be showin' your hand fer fair. Let me take care of myself. I'll be all right. But I thank you, ma'am, for your kindness all the samee."

"I oughtn't to allow it," said the Queen remorsefully. "You have my deepest gratitude."

"And that's worth piles," declared Augustus gallantly.

"Montey," said the reporter, watching him thoughtfully, "you are worthy of a better play than the farce you are acting."

"Look here, sir, if you are sayin' anything against the Queen here, you'd better shut up," threatened Higgins, belligerently.

Pennington shrugged his shoulders and lighted a cigar. The Queen uneasily buried herself in her plush-covered pedigree. Sir Roy told his story to the Super Captain, who promptly swore out an arrest for Augustus Higgins, for spending money which was not his and for not returning the dress-suit.

CHAPTER XVI.

TWO MEDDLING VICE-QUEENS.

THERE were other forces working for the undoing of Queen Angelica and her Envoy Extraordinary, had they known it.

One of the most potent of these forces was the Vice-Queen of the Dutch Fraus. The other was the Vice-Queen of the Van Winkle Dames.

Since early dawn the Vice-Queen of the Dutch Fraus stood shivering in her wrapper at the window for the newsboy who delivers the morning papers at Nutley, N. J. And when at last she did read the *Courier* and found no breath of suspicion as to the genuineness of her hated rival's Envoy, but rather praise for him and serious consideration, her rage knew no bounds. She completely lost her temper. She quarreled with her husband; she slapped her children; she dismissed the cook. And she took a solemn vow

that she would not move a step to bring about peace in her home at Nutley before she had dragged her arch-enemy by fair means or foul from her throne, and abased her in the dust of ignominy and contempt. Then she took train for New York City.

The Vice-Queen of the Van Winkle Dames was descending the gangway of the *St. Louis* at the very moment that the ferry-boat in which the enraged Vice of the Dutch Fraus was embarked was moving into her slip at Christopher Street. The Vice-Queen of the Van Winkle Dames had been the companion of Queen Belinda in her European travels. But when Queen Belinda had heard of the honor that was to be done the rival queen, her indignation knew no bounds. She felt sure that Queen Angelica could not rightfully claim the honor. She knew that it was meant for herself. And to make perfectly sure of this, she saw Prince Geoffrey de La Fleur at Paris. But although the Prince expressed regret at the unfortunate mixing up of queens, he absolutely refused to interfere. To him all American queens looked alike. They were nuisances, and he had long ago regretted

the enthusiasm he had wasted upon them. But this much satisfaction did Queen Belinda gain. She learned what she had been morally certain of: the Prince had intended to give the decoration to herself and not to Queen Angelica. So Queen Belinda determined upon redress. She promptly dispatched the Vice-Queen, with whom she had been enjoying the pomp and glitter of European courts, back to America, to protest against the conferring of the Order upon the rival queen. And although the Vice-Queen of the Van Winkle Dames had indeed arrived one day too late to prevent the conferring of the Order upon Queen Angelica, it was not too late to wrest the Order away from her and to bear it back in triumph to her exalted head in Europe.

This intention the Vice-Queen told to such of the anxious Van Winkle Dames as had assembled at the dock to meet her.

"Yes, my Dames," she said, as they crowded about her in the drawing-room on board, "I have come back to see that justice is done to our beloved sovereign. We will beard the thief in her den. We will

not rest till we have secured the Order. The law is on our side. I shall consult with my brother, the magistrate, to see if she can be arrested for obtaining goods under false pretenses unless she immediately relinquishes her unholy spoil. My Dames, let us go at once to the hotel and demand the Order before it is too late. We will squeeze it from her."

Then all the Dames entered the carriages they had provided, and drove to the Hotel Rotterdam, where Queen Angelica, quite without the slightest intimation of the storm that was to burst upon her head, had just dismissed the Turkish Minister with smiles of delight.

The moment that the ferry had reached her slip, the enraged Vice of the Dutch Fraus had likewise taken a carriage to the hotel, and because she had no luggage to be examined by the custom-house officers, she had arrived some minutes before the Vice-Queen of the rival society.

For some minutes she prowled stealthily about the corridors and parlors, undecided as to how she should accomplish her enemy's downfall. She first wished to

learn further particulars of the mysterious Envoy. She must probe and stab until she found the vital point. And even while she was prowling about, she was accosted by the rival Vice-Queen.

"Come with me to the parlor," commanded the latter.

"You are going to ask me about Queen Angelica's Decoration, I suppose," remarked the Vice-Queen of the Dutch Fraus coolly.

"*Her* Decoration!" chorused the assembled Dames.

"Now please don't lose your temper," cooed the Vice-Queen of the Dutch Fraus, "because that will be useless. I may as well say at once that I am no longer an adherent of Queen Angelica, and I wish I were a low Irish woman so that I might pull her hair."

"Really!" cried the delighted Dames.

"I hate that woman as I have never hated any one, and I never can forgive her now that she has called me a suburbanite, and has taunted me with residing at Nutley, N. J."

“Oh !” again gasped the Dames in indignant sympathy.

“So that if you will tell me all you know about the Decoration, and if you will listen to me as to what I know, we can promptly go to work to plan how we can ruin the creature.”

“What will your reward be ?” demanded the Vice-Queen of the Dames, skeptically.

“To be made second Vice-Queen of your society.”

“I think I may grant that,” said the Vice-Queen of the Dames, very much relieved that a first viceship was not demanded. “And now tell us all you know of the matter.”

A spirited conference followed. The Vice-Queen of the Fraus poured forth her suspicions. The emissary of Queen Belinda poured forth all of hers. The unanimous belief of all the Dames and of the two Vice-Queens was that the Envoy must be seen at all hazards.

“He holds the key to the situation,” said the Vice-Queen of the Dames. “Bribe him, and we are certain of victory. But before we do that, I shall see my

brother the magistrate and try to get the woman upstairs arrested."

"Imagine her," derisively interrupted an estatic Dame, "riding to the police-court in a patrol wagon ! It would be delicious !"

"My Dames, you will await my return patiently here in the parlor. I shall return with a warrant for her arrest, if possible. And let me caution you not to talk too loudly. There may be spies about."

With this parting admonition the two Vice-Queens took their departure to the police-court to get a warrant for Queen Angelica's arrest.

At first the Dames heeded the wise warning. Agog with expectation, hysterical with excitement, they discussed the situation in little groups. They cried "Hush !" when any one giggled. They frowned when any one spoke above a whisper. But by and bye there was no one to frown at a giggle or to cry hush at a loud voice, simply because they were all giggling and talking at the top of their voices. So that when the two Vice-Queens returned after half an hour's fruitless quest of the warrant, they were

horrified to hear a babel of voices, and to see half a dozen hall-boys listening curiously outside the door.

The Vice-Queens knew too well the infirmity of the sex to waste time in reproaches. Whatever mischief had been done had been done.

“I have not been able to get a warrant,” said the Vice-Queen, acquainting her hearers with the success of her mission. “My brother says that no theft can be proved. She may really have been under the impression that the Order was actually for her. But I am not going to tell her that a warrant cannot be obtained. I shall pretend that a warrant *has* been obtained and will be served on her unless she at once relinquishes the Order that has been unlawfully conferred upon her. If that fails, I shall write another note and promise her that she may escape to Europe away from the taunts of New York, on the condition that she first gives up the Decoration and signs a statement that she was not the lawful recipient. We will try the warrant scare first.”

But the hall-boy came back with it in his hand.

“ I’ve banged and banged at the door, ma’am, and she won’t answer.”

“ Then go and bang and bang again ! ” angrily commanded the Vice-Queen. “ And if she won’t answer the door, slip the note under the door ! ”

CHAPTER XVII.

FAREWELL TO THE GLITTER OF ROYALTY.

LITTLE Higgins saw it first.

The Queen read it with despair in her eyes. Sir Roy laughed at the threat.

"I am not much of a lawyer," said the loyal Sir Roy, "but she could no more have you arrested than she could Montmorencey here."

"Well, that ain't goin' to be any trick for the Super Captain," said Higgins, ruefully.

"Is there nothing I can do?" asked the Queen, wringing her hands.

"Simply to wait," replied Pennington, grimly. He had to confess that things looked pretty blue.

And while they were yet discussing the first note, another was slipped under the door.

The Queen read it aloud.

"And you won't give up the Decoration, I sup-

pose?" said Pennington. It made very little difference to him whether she did or no. If she did, it would make a good story. If she did not, something equally exciting would probably happen.

"I can see nothing else for me to do," mournfully replied the Queen. "It is impossible for us to escape. Montmorency here must be discovered. And you are bound to be seen and recognized by other reporters."

"Yes, I never counted on being held in the room in a state of siege," said Pennington, glumly enough.

"It's all your fault," said Higgins, turning impudently to the reporter. "If you hadn't got us into the danger, the Queen'd been O. K."

"Fault or no fault," retorted Pennington angrily, "I shall hold you to your agreement. You are not to give away the *Courier*. Remember that. If I had chosen, I might have given the whole show away, and none of you could have done anything. Don't say it's my fault. And once more, I won't have the newspaper sacrificed."

"Oh, I didn't mean no offense. I'll stand by the

Courier all right. But you've got to stand by the Queen, too."

"Then we'll all fall together," said Sir Roy.

"If we fall," said Pennington. "How in the world are they going to make us talk if we don't want to? They can prove nothing if we keep quiet."

"I don't deserve such loyal subjects," said the Queen, smiling at them, sadly. "No, no. Open the door and let them come in and take the Decoration. Let them see how foolish and vain I have been."

Super No. 5 sank on one knee and seized the hand of the Queen.

"Not on your life, ma'am. I said I'd stand by you and I will. We'll all stand by you and bring you out all right."

He kissed her hand rapturously.

"My Montmorency!" murmured the Queen, quite overcome.

"Well, that's all right, Higgins. We have decided to stand by the Queen, but how, that's the question."

"I've thought of a way, sir," said Higgins, timidly.

"Well, speak up," impatiently urged Sir Roy.

"There's no time to lose, you know."

"Well, in this letter of the fake queen, she says, ma'am, that there's a steamer sailing for Europe in an hour, and that she'd give you a chance to go on it if you'd give her the Order."

"But we've decided not to give up the Order, stupid," said Sir Roy.

"Why don't you skip to Europe anyway, ma'am?" asked Higgins quietly, not taking any notice of Sir Roy.

"How can we, Montey? We've got to go through a door to get out, I suppose. One glimpse of me or of you will give away the game. And they'll get out an injunction very likely forbidding the Queen to take the Decoration with her abroad."

"I've thought of that, sir, of course," answered Higgins confidently. "On no account must we open that there door."

"Then how are we going? Fly?" sneered Sir Roy.

"Have you noticed the fire-escape, ma'am?" asked Augustus mildly.

"The fire-escape!" echoed Pennington, a sudden light dawning on him.

"You remember, sir, that that's how the man clumb up to let me in here. And what you can clumb up by you can clumb down by. Have you noticed it, sir? You see no one can see you if you go down by it because of the angle of the wall there."

The Queen, Sir Roy, and Pennington were staring out of the window at the escape Higgins was pointing out to them.

"But I never could go down seven stories by a fire-escape," said Queen Angelica, aghast. "And in the day-time, too."

"You would only have to clumb to the next story, ma'am, and get in by a window there. The window's at the far end of a long hall, sir, and it wouldn't be no great stunt to get off without any one catchin' on."

"It's magnificent!" agreed Pennington, admiringly. "But the trunks? Queen Angelica couldn't leave them here."

"Well, I was figgerin' it out this way," continued Augustus, earnestly, and blushing to find himself listened to so attentively. "I was figgerin' it out that maybe you and the Queen ought to go first. She

can put on a veil and things so no one's goin' to catch on to her. And you and the Queen would skip out and take a cab and hurry up to the dock."

"And leave me here?" asked Sir Roy, dolefully.

"But they must never find you about the hotel, Montey. They would guess the part you have been playing in this little comedy. Circumstantial evidence would be strongly against you."

"Cert. When you've got off, then I skip too."

"Where?" asked the Queen, anxiously.

"Well, ma'am, I can't exactly say. But if that Super Captain has a warrant out for me, I guess I'll be pinched all right, all right. I'd take good care I wasn't pinched round the hotel, though. But if I was, I'd let on I was a sneak-thief or somethin'."

"No, no," cried Queen Angelica, "I can never allow this. Never!"

"Why, ma'am, you don't suppose I'm goin' to get pinched a purpose, do you? Not on your life, I ain't; I'm only tellin' you what may come. And even if they was to, I should say I'd been on a spree. I've never been took up for anythin' before, and they'd let me

off easy. And I've got the stuff to pay back the Cap, and I'll wear the dress-soot. What more'd they want ? ”

“ I'll stand by you, Montey, if it comes to that,” promised Pennington.

“ But what's to become of me ? ” asked Sir Roy again.

“ Why, sir,” answered Higgins with some disdain, “ I thought as you would stay and open the door, fifteen minutes after we'd gone. You see no one's got anythin' against you. You ain't a queen. There ain't any warrant for you. You ain't a reporter who's been playin' a fake Envoy.”

“ Exactly,” cried Pennington. “ In fifteen minutes after we have escaped I'll send an expressman to get the trunks. He'll bang on the door to beat the band. You'll open it, yawning and stretching your arms. The Queen ? The Envoys ? They left two or three hours ago. You have over-slept and are afraid you will miss your train. You will drive down to the docks and join the Queen.”

“ I'm only afraid for you, Montmorencey,” said the Queen, looking at him with troubled eyes,

"Don't you worry about me, ma'am," said Super No. 5, cheerfully. "I'm all right. I can get off, I guess. But if I'm pinched round this hotel, the jig's up. Because you said I hadn't been the Envoy."

"Then, very well," acquiesced the Queen, yielding rather to his earnestness than to his logic, "the sooner we go, the better."

"Now you're talkin' ma'am," cried Higgins, overjoyed.

Sir Roy and the reporter planned precisely what the former should say and how he should act when he opened the door after the others' escape. Queen Angelica picked up the few trinkets lying about.

"And don't forget the Decoration, ma'am," cautioned Augustus, anxiously, as he went into the next apartment to put on once more the dress-suit hired from Mr. Isaacs, on Third Avenue.

"Are we all ready?" asked the reporter, at length.

"All serene," said Augustus.

"Shall we see you at the steamer?" asked the Queen.

Super No. 5 shook his head,

"It wouldn't be safe, ma'am. It might give you away."

"Then, good-bye. I shall be grateful to you as long as I live. You have saved me a humiliation."

"And I, ma'am, shan't forget how you and me have played queens and envoys together. It's been a great function—*e-mense*, simply *e-mense*! Good-bye, ma'am. Hold on tight, and don't look down or you'll get giddy."

Queen Angelica stepped out on the fire-escape, Sir Roy arranging her skirts.

"By gad," thought Sir Roy, "the little brute couldn't take the thing more seriously if it were tragedy."

"They're all right," whispered Augustus, after a few minutes had gone.

"That's good," said Sir Roy, lighting a cigar.

They sat there a few minutes in silence, Sir Roy smoking leisurely, Augustus biting his nails nervously and pulling down his cuffs.

"I'd best be goin', sir," he said respectfully.

"Very well, Higgins."

Augustus held out his hand. But when Sir Roy did not take any notice of it, he withdrew it quickly, and briskly stepped out on the fire-escape.

“Ta-ta,” he said, waving his hand.

Sir Roy lazily turned his head and watched him bobbing down. Then he cast a look at the clock and murmured sleepily :

“Queer little brute, that.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

HIGGINS STANDS BY THE QUEEN.

AFTER Augustus had disappeared down the fire-escape, Sir Roy put on his overcoat and gloves, to be ready when the man should come after the trunks.

Almost promptly on the fifteen minutes agreed upon there were four sharp raps. Sir Roy cast a glance about the room, fastened the window by which the three had made their escape, turned the key, and threw open the door.

Instantly a score of people were craning their necks to get a glimpse within. A howl of disappointed "Ohs !" arose from the Van Winkle Dames, the reporters, and the two Vice-Queens when they saw that their game had fled.

Sir Roy ignored them all.

"You have come for the trunks ?" he asked the porter. "There they are,"

Then he edged his way towards the elevator.

"But, sir," cried one of the baffled reporters, "where is the Envoy?"

"You mean the Envoys—there were two of them, you know."

"Well, the Envoys, sir?"

"Oh, they left the hotel some time since," cheerfully replied Sir Roy. "The Envoy-in-chief and his secretary, who was the Deputy Envoy last night, were talking of going to Washington, I believe. But they were undecided whether they would go to Washington to see the President, or whether they would take a look at Niagara Falls. At least they hadn't made up their minds when they left, shortly after the interview with the Turkish Minister."

"Interview with the Turkish Minister!" repeated the reporters, staring at one another.

"You need not worry, gentlemen," replied Sir Roy, suavely. "A representative of the press was present."

"But it is impossible that they could have left!" shrieked the Vice-Queen of the Dutch Fraus. "How could they have left without any of the reporters knowing it? They were watching downstairs."

"Really, madame," answered Sir Roy coldly, "you are welcome to look under the bedstead, if you wish. And the clothes-press is open for your inspection."

"But by what way *could* they have gone?" demanded the sulky Vice-Queen.

"By what way?" repeated Sir Roy, shrugging his shoulders. "Do you think that is a sensible question? I suppose they could hardly have flown, nor," added he with good-natured ridicule, "could they have gone down by the fire-escape. But before she left the hotel, Queen Angelica expressed her regret at having to leave without bidding good-bye to you, her devoted and trusted friend."

Then the two Vice-Queens turned away in confusion. And the Vice-Queens, the reporters, and the Van Winkle Dames went down the corridor, exceedingly sorrowful. Sir Roy left the hotel in triumph.

To put the reporters crowding after him completely off the scent, he shouted, "Grand Central Station" in a loud voice. But when the hansom had gone a few blocks he thrust his walking-stick against the trap and said softly, "American Line, foot of Fulton."

And twenty minutes before the ship sailed, Sir Roy, who had been looking after the luggage, knocked at Queen Angelica's state-room.

"Angelica, my love," exclaimed the devoted Sir Roy, "I have just met a dear friend to whom I should like to introduce you—the Rev. Horatio Simkins."

Queen Angelica blushed.

"Oh, Roy !"

"Yes, my love, he is outside with two witnesses. This state-room is a little small for the ceremony, but it will be quite as legal as if performed in a church."

And so they were married, the witnesses seated around on the lower berth.

"It would have been nice if the reporter and Montmorencey could have been present, wouldn't it, Roy ?" she asked, as the ship went down the bay.

"No," replied Sir Roy, decisively. "Angelica, my love, I have been a devoted lover. I am sure you will grant that. I have never hesitated to bow to you as Queen Angelica. But as Mrs. Roy Poplar, love, I must ask you now——"

"To bow to you ?" cried the ex-Queen, excitedly.
"Never, Roy !"

"No, my love, certainly not," replied Sir Roy in extreme confusion. "But a little compromise, love, a little——"

"I shall live my own life, Roy," declared Mrs. Poplar.

"Yes, my love," said Mr. Poplar, meekly.

And little Higgins ?

He had made his escape beautifully. Fearfully and cautiously, he had entered the window of the room below. He had fastened the window to disarm any suspicion as to the means of his escape. He had avoided the elevator, and had descended to the ground floor by the staircase. Alertly, doggedly, he had elbowed his way to the nearest door. Then he found himself on the Thirty-fourth Street entrance, free and happy.

But as he scurried briskly along to Sixth Avenue, his coat buttoned up to his chin, his eyes fixed meditatively on the pavement, thinking of the glorious part he had just played, a sharp tap on his shoulder startled him, and a sharp, business-like voice whispered in his ear, "I want you."

Augustus looked up. He had expected to see a policeman. It was a man in plain clothes who accosted him. So he drew himself up to his height of five feet seven inches and said impudently:

“Aw, what yer givin’ us?”

“Oh, it’s all right. You are the man. Come along in here quiet, and don’t make a fuss.”

Augustus followed the stranger into a saloon, not because he was exactly pining for a drink at that moment, but because his arm was clutched in a very firm manner.

“Got a telephone?” asked the man, still holding Augustus by the arm.

The barkeeper pointed to a booth.

When connections were made, all the words said were: “I’ve got him. He’s in Mike Foley’s place. We’ll wait for you.”

“Oh, so you are a detective, are you? I s’pose it’s the Super Captain who’s after me, ain’t it?”

“That’s who it is. I s’pose you’ve had a good time? Still got on your full dress-suit, I see.”

“Bully,” agreed Augustus. “How d’you happen to nab me?”

"I seen your picture. The Super Captain showed it me. It's where you're suping in 'Held at Bay.' You're in full dress-suit there, and I recognized you right off. And I knew you'd be pretty sure to make for Sixth Avenue when you come out."

"Out of where?" asked Augustus, uneasily.

The detective pointed to the Hotel Rotterdam.

Augustus laughed derisively.

"What'd I be doin' there?"

Just then the Super Captain came in, rubbing his hands delightedly.

"Hello, Gus!" he cried genially, waving the detective to stand aside.

"Hello, Cap," replied Augustus.

"Had a good time?" asked the Super Captain, admiringly.

"Oh, so-so," answered Augustus.

The Super Captain leaned forward and said:

"Now, Gus, old man, it's no use beatin' round the bush. We're two old friends. Tell me all about it."

"Well, Cap," replied Super No. 5 slowly, "there ain't much to tell. When you're jagged, you know,

you don't have much of a recollection the next mornin', and I was pretty tight."

"Now, Gus, that's a good bluff. But you didn't have a jag so as not to know what you done."

"Maybe you don't get that way, Cap, but I do," persisted Higgins.

"Rats!" cried the Super Captain. "You know as well as I have, that you've been raisin' high-jinks. The *Courier's* full of it this mornin'. I know it, and you know it. So what's the good of gettin' a swelled head and too high and mighty to tell me, an old pal."

Augustus scratched his ear perplexedly and looked at the Super Captain open-mouthed.

"Cap, I ain't a notion what you're drivin' at. Of course you and me are good pals. You've always done the square thing by me and I would by you. But you're off your base if you think it's me who's been cuttin' up any high jinks up to the hotel there. Why when I come up last night, after you seen me off in the hansom, I found the Envoy had come after all. He and his secretary had both come, that's what they told me, though of course I ain't seen 'em my-

self. Then I kicked about the money, and the Queen's feller, he paid me, thirty-five dollars, and I come away and got full on your dough. That's all."

Augustus looked his employer steadily in the eye. Mr. Jones returned the gaze with interest.

"That's too thin by half ! Why, you're sober as a judge !"

"I can carry a good deal of liquor, Cap. You ought to have seen me about three this mornin' toddlin' in to a Raines Law hotel. Jag ? Gee witicher !"

"You're an idiot, Gus !" cried the Super Captain, losing his temper, "if you expect I'm goin' to swallow that ! Look a-here, you own up to touchin' me on that thirty-five, don't you ?"

"Sure," replied Higgins, cheerfully. "But I'll pay you back next week. I've got some dough comin' to me next week. On the level."

"And I'll tell you this on the level : If you tell me all you done up at the Rotterdam there as Envoy, I'll let you off. And I don't mind lettin' you know, Gus, that you'll be doin' a big favor to me. I've got a graft if you don't go back on me. The Vice-Queen

of the Dames will pay handsome if I can prove that you were the Envoy. You see she's dead sore on Queen Angelica. Now, look here. If you'll let me in on what you done last night, and if you'll blab it to the Vice-Queen of the Dames, I'll divvy up what I make out of her. On the level. But if you stick to that rot about gettin' full, I'll have you pinched, sure. That's on the level, too."

Augustus yawned.

"Cap," he said, blinking his eyes sleepily, "it's no good jawin' about that. What's took place up at the Rotterdam don't worry me a darn. I ain't seen nothin' up there. I don't know nothin' what's been goin' on up there. I ain't heard nothin'."

"You're a chump!" said the Super Captain, savagely. "Take him along, officer. "He'll tell another tale when he's spent a night in the cooler."

But Augustus Higgins, late Envoy Extraordinary, did not tell another tale. He doggedly refused to say more than that he had been on a spree. Asked where he had been drinking, he replied that he did not remember. Asked with whom he had been drinking,

he replied he did not remember. In fact, a Tammany boss before an investigating committee from Albany could not be more reticent.

The Super Captain had sold his suspicions to the two Vice-Queens for a goodly price. The Vice-Queen of the Van Winkle Dames arranged to have Augustus Higgins examined by her brother the magistrate. But not the threats of the sergeant, the cross-questions of the magistrate, the cajolings of the two Vice-Queens, the entreaties of the Super Captain could make Augustus swerve one syllable from his reply. He had been drunk. Where? He did not remember. That was all he had to say, absolutely.

"It's a dead easy snap," he said to himself after a siege in the court-room. "All I've got to do is to keep glum. And not elephants nor camels are goin' to pull out of me what I been doin'. I stand by the Queen. But I wish that reporter feller would come along now. He said he'd stand by me if I didn't give away his paper. And I ain't goin' to do that 'cause if I did I'd give away the Queen."

But young Pennington had had troubles of his own.

He had returned to the *Courier* Building after he had seen Queen Angelica in a cab, with a story of the great Turkish Minister Interview in his pocket. He had entered the office with a beating heart. He had expected the city editor to fall on his neck and to weep tears of sheer gratitude. He had expected to be smacked on the back by his fellow reporters.

But the city editor had merely glanced at his copy and thrown it carelessly aside. Then he had turned on him and said sharply:

"That stuff's all very well." He poked Pennington's story with his pencil. "But you know that there's a much better story behind that, and you are the man to tell it."

"Really, sir——" stammered Pennington.

"You can tell it," repeated the city editor, looking at the young reporter narrowly. "Who was that Envoy Extraordinary? You know. Go to your desk and give me a column and a half. Make an exposé of it, something bright and humorous. Show the wires behind the throne, Mr. Pennington."

"But Mr. Caverley," stammered Pennington once more, "I—I——"

‘You won’t have any too much time to spare,’ replied the editor coolly, “because I want to send you out on the Roberts Murder Case.”

Pennington went back to his desk miserably enough. He knew that the Roberts Murder Case was just a sop. For a few minutes he had a great mind to nibble at the bait. Why shouldn’t he throw his scruples to the wind? The Queen had escaped safely. Ten to one the facts were bound to come out. The chances were that Higgins would tell.

But Pennington knew that Higgins would not tell. It was quite useless for him to attempt to persuade himself of that. Higgins would not tell because he had promised not to. Well, he wouldn’t either. He couldn’t very well be less of a man of honor than a vulgar little beast of a super. So he flung down his pad and pencil on the desk, thrust his hands deep into his trousers’ pockets, and trembling with apprehension, stalked bravely up to the city editor’s desk.

“Well, well?” cried that functionary. “Why don’t you get on with that story?”

“There isn’t any story to tell, sir,” replied Pennington quietly.

"No story to tell?"

"Not so far as I am concerned, sir."

"What do you mean so far as you are concerned?" demanded the amazed editor.

"I—I mean as a gentleman," answered Pennington, shamefacedly.

"A what?" thundered the city editor.

"I said a gentleman, sir," replied Pennington, looking his chief between the eyes.

The city editor held his scissors in mid-air and stared. He snipped them together while he stared at the cub reporter three seconds, then stirred up the story that Pennington had brought him, and said meekly:

"Well, maybe you'd better work on that. Make a column of it."

Pennington went back to his desk the happiest man on Park Row. And when he had worked over his story and brought it back, the editor actually grinned and said, "That's all right. Now I want you to go out with Williams and Carson on that Roberts Case."

And the cub had gone off with the two old report-

ers in a delirium of ecstasy. He had forgotten all about Augustus Higgins, his late colleague. So little Higgins would have fared badly enough if he had pinned his faith on the good intentions of the reporter.

But just when everything seemed to be going against him,—when the magistrate was actually threatening to commit him for contempt of court because he refused to answer certain questions,—when in vain his eyes swept the court-room for one friendly face—when he felt very lonely and deserted, he was unexpectedly set at liberty. The Super Captain withdrew the charges.

The latter had been induced to do this at the earnest request of the Vice-Queen of the Van Winkle Dames. The devotion of Super No. 5 touched her. She had her suspicions, indeed, that the Envoy affair was a very crooked business. But, as she said to the second Vice-Queen, one can never tell when one might want to hire a lord chancellor or even an envoy oneself. And it was always a problem where to find trustworthy supernumeraries to play the delicate parts. And

Augustus they might hire with no question of his faithfulness. So the Vice-Queen used her influence with the magistrate and the employer of Augustus, and he was set at liberty.

"You don't bear a grudge against me, Gus?" asked the Super Captain, taking his arm.

"Not a bit, Cap," answered Augustus, cheerfully. "You're doin' the square thing not pressin' them charges."

"And I s'pose you won't never tell me what you done last night?"

"I told you already," replied Augustus, shutting his mouth very tight.

"All right, Gus. Will you be back supin' to-night at the *Frivolity*?"

"If you'll have me, Cap. I'll swear off."

"All right," said the Super Captain, winking his left eye expressively.

But Augustus did not wink back in return. He simply looked very, very bored.

Queen Angelica is now gratifying her passion for playing the rôles of royalty in one of the upper Broad-

way theaters. She is Portia in the "Merchant of Venice," and Super No. 17 is Augustus Higgins.

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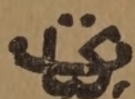
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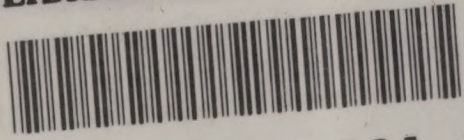


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